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# Mobile Beat

THE MOBILE ENTERTAINER'S MAGAZINE • WWW.MOBILEBEAT.COM

ISSUE 159 NOVEMBER 2014

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A bride and groom are embracing on a stage. The bride is wearing a white wedding dress with a lace-up bodice and a long veil. The groom is wearing a dark suit with a white shirt and a boutonniere. They are surrounded by blue stage lighting and smoke. In the background, there are stage lights and equipment.

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How to Create an Iron-Clad Wedding Agenda



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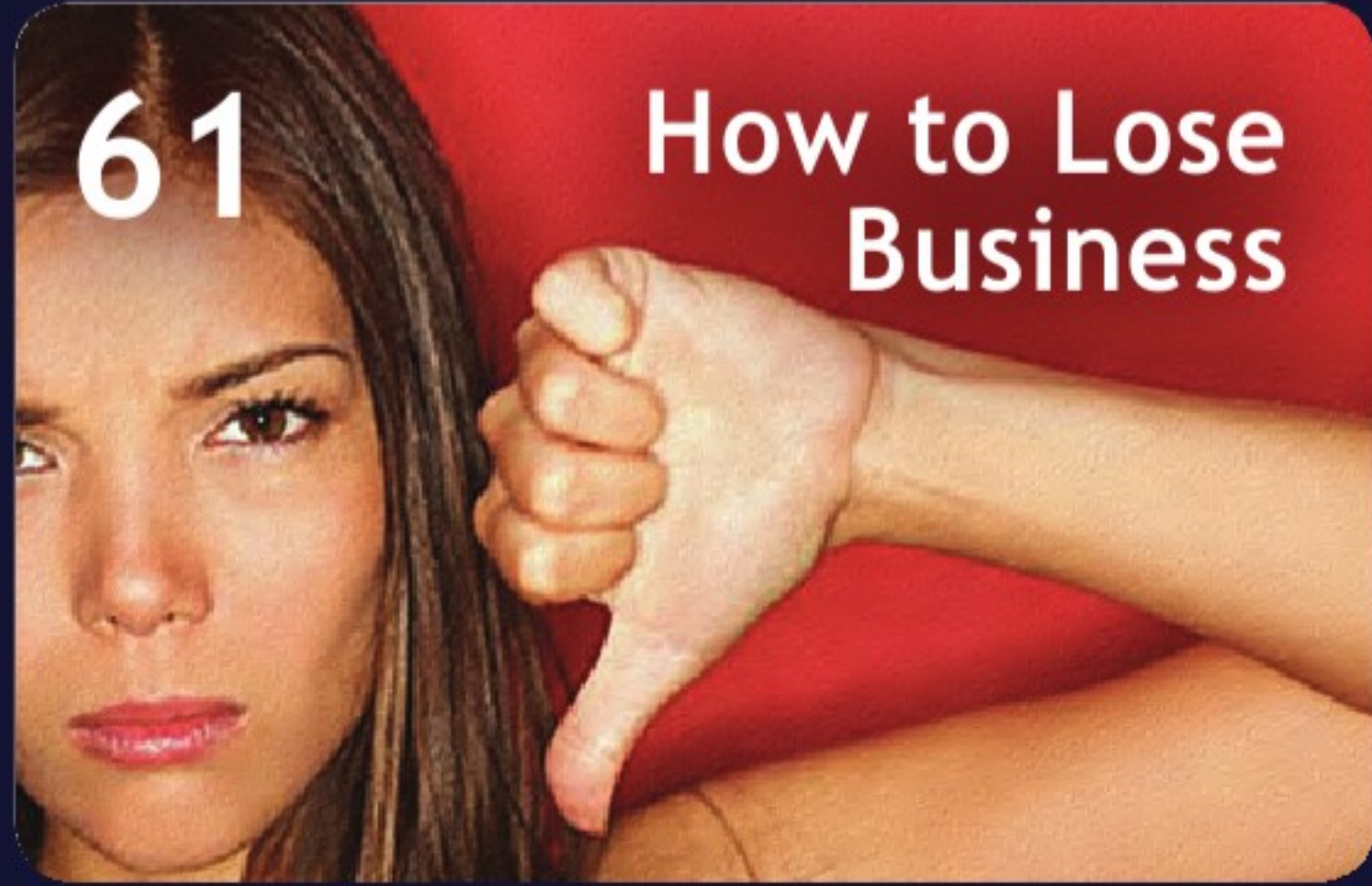
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# WANT TO MEET PENN JILLETTE?



**The game continues to change!**

The legendary **Penn Jillette**, widely known as one half of the duo Penn & Teller, will be appearing at Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2015.

After decades of performing to sold out, live crowds, Mr. Jillette is a consummate expert in the trade of not only entertaining, but constructing a show and keeping it fresh to stand the test of time.

See Penn Jillette **IN PERSON** at Mobile Beat Las Vegas 2015.

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## TRACK ONE

Yes, with regular columns like “Book More Brides” and “Wedding Beat,” I realize that in Mobile Beat we cover that meat-and-potatoes event for a majority of mobile DJs—the wedding reception—in every issue. However, now and then, it is good to take an even closer look at something so important to this industry. Thus, a Special Wedding Edition of the magazine.

Hopefully, though, we're hitting this target from a few different angles that provide some fresh perspectives. Inside, you'll find advice on creating a solid reception agenda, how to avoid some major errors that could damage your wedding business bottom line, and “emergency preparedness” for weddings and other events as well.

A common theme among a number of writers this time was one's attitude toward the wedding gig itself. Both Paul Kida and Mike Ficher come at this from different angles, Paul focusing on how to handle wedding day difficulties, and Mike providing a valuable reality check for entertainers who may be tempted to become blasé in the face of weekend after weekend of the reception grind. Bottom line: While each nuptial event adds to the wedding entertainer's bottom line, each one is also a completely unique event for the couple and their guests...and our job is make it wonderful.

– Dan Walsh, Editor-in-Chief

## Mobile Beat

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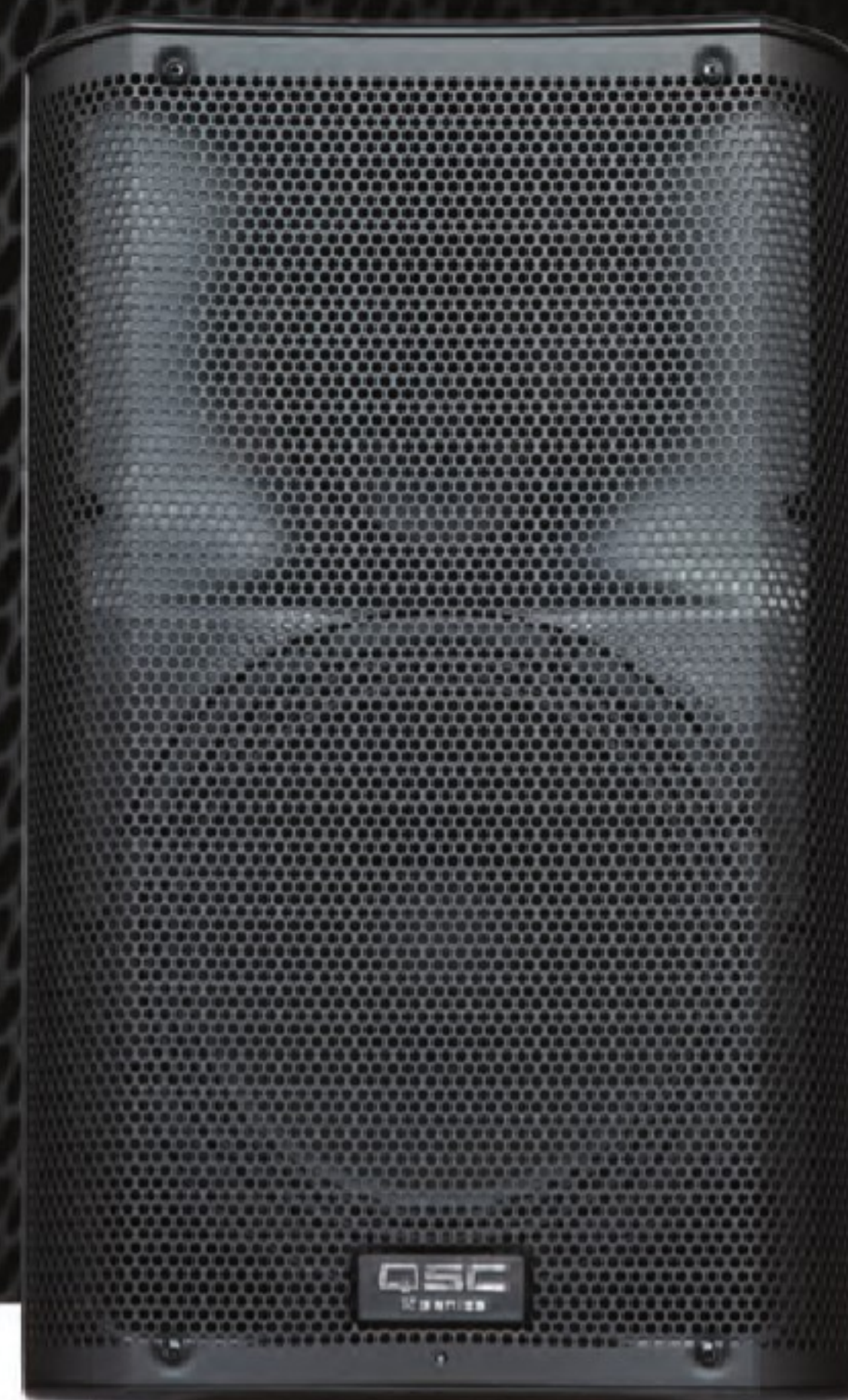
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## Shaking Up MBLV with Penn Jillette

The producers of MOBILE BEAT LAS VEGAS have announced that PENN JILLETTE, one half of the world-famous, Emmy Award-winning and Las Vegas-headlining magic duo Penn & Teller, will appear at the 2015 installment of Mobile Beat Las Vegas on Wednesday, February 25, 2015 at the historic Riviera Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Although anything might happen, he is expected to share insights gained during his many



years as an entertainer. This promises to be the most interesting and unpredictable MBLV session to date!

Together since 1975, Penn & Teller's live show spent years on Broadway and is now the longest-running headliner show in Las Vegas, playing nightly at The Rio Hotel & Casino. In 2013, the pair was once again honored as "Las Vegas Magicians of the Year."

Jillette is a cultural phenomenon as a solo personality as well: as an author, TV host and podcaster, among other things.



Jillette's solo exposure is enormous: from Howard Stern to Piers Morgan and Oprah to Glenn Beck; the Op-Ed pages of The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and the Los Angeles Times; appearances on The Celebrity Apprentice, Dancing with the Stars, MTV Cribs, and Chelsea Lately; and hosting the NBC game show Identity.

He cohosted the controversial Showtime series Penn & Teller: Bullshit!, which was nominated for sixteen Emmy Awards and was the longest-running show in the history of the network. He currently co-hosts Penn & Teller: Fool Us! for The CW and serves as a judge on Syfy's Wizard Wars.

Jillette's latest book, Every Day Is An Atheist Holiday, takes an insightful and humorous look at holidays from an atheist's perspective. His previous book, God No! Signs You Might Be An Atheist and Other Magic Tales, spent six weeks on the New York Times Best Sellers list.

His new podcast, Penn's Sunday School, was the No. 1 most-downloaded podcast on iTunes during its debut week and was named by iTunes as Best New Comedy Podcast for 2012.

As a philanthropist, his efforts have raised thousands of dollars for Las Vegas-based charities AFAN (Aid for AIDS NV) and Opportunity Village. The annual "Penn & Teller's 13 Bloody Days of Xmas" continues to be the most successful blood drive in the Vegas Valley, resulting in an average of 4000 pints donated every holiday season.

In April of this year, Penn & Teller were given their very own star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

## Jason Jani: DJing for DJs at MBLV

At the upcoming Mobile Beat Las Vegas event, along with a totally new presentation approach, the daytime events will offer attendees yet another unique feature: a DJ playing for DJs.

As Bill Hermann and Jason Jones serve as hosts for the entire week's educational and inspirational opportunities, DJ Jason Jani will help keep MBLV flowing between sessions with music and other entertainment, while providing yet another learning opportunity for attendees who see him in action.

"Well, I'm just super-pumped to be involved," says Jani, a veteran NYC-metro-area DJ with 15 years and thousands of weddings and other events under his belt. "I mean, Mobile Beat has always been an incredible opportunity for pros to come together and learn things they can apply to their events and their craft...I'm excited



to be part of the event, and also part of the learning experience."

Thus with Jani facilitating, the new MBLV "experience" will extend even to the segues: Between featured presenters, the DJ will offer different musical approaches intended to demonstrate what's effective with today's audiences.

**REGISTER TODAY!** Full event passes for MBLV are available for a LIMITED TIME at only \$199. (Onsite price is \$299.) This pass gains access to the full MBLV experience: the presentations, the exhibits, the parties, and more. Go to: [www.mobilebeatlasvegas.com/register](http://www.mobilebeatlasvegas.com/register)

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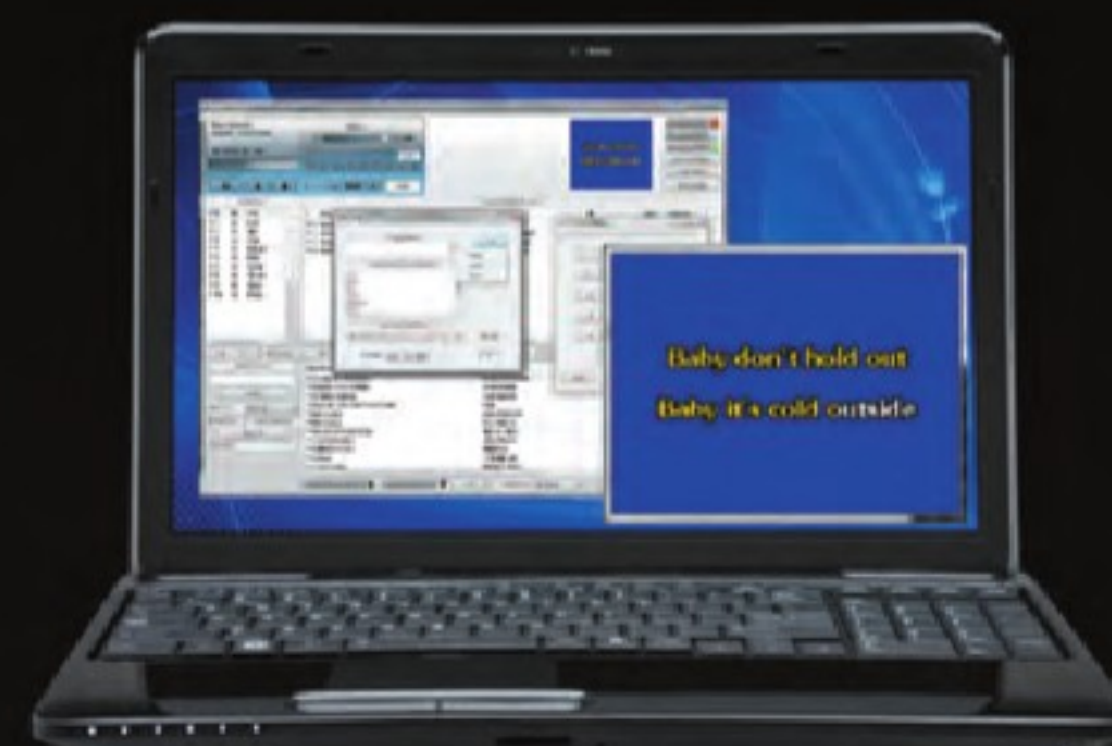
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# Battling Burnout

HOW TO FAN THE FLAMES BACK TO FULL INTENSITY

By Stu Chisholm

Anyone who has persisted in the DJ business has had periods where things seem to pile up. The rigors of entrepreneurship, dealing with the same types of clients, all with the same questions, the constant barrage of solicitations—web hosting, Google search optimization, cell and credit card services, “are you hiring?” and on and on—the bookkeeping and paperwork, equipment upkeep and upgrade... or, as the group Taxxi once put it, “Le Metro Boulot Dodo” (the daily grind) can really take the wind out of a DJ’s sails. The job becomes tedious. You hear yourself saying, “This is NOT why I got into this!”

When DJs reach this point, they’ve got a real decision to make! It’s time to ask, am I done?

The first thing to keep in mind is that everyone has these moments. You’re not alone. And they ARE moments, which means they will pass. The best strategies to adopt are those that help them pass a whole lot faster! Also, we need to place natural start and ending points into our routine. Remember when you were in school? No matter how tough your day was, you had things to look forward to that broke up the tedium; recess, lunch, study hall, etc. So you knew that no matter what you were doing, it would be set aside or completed by a certain time. Psychologically, this makes it a whole lot easier to throw oneself into a particular task.

I got this particular bit of wisdom a long, long time ago via one of my best friends. At the time, she’d gotten a job with a video company who distributed tapes (remember those?) by very authoritative motivational speakers and self-help gurus who would later go on to become famous, such as Dr. Wayne Dyer. What I found most fascinating was that the biggest consumers of these video seminars were CEOs of huge corporations! One on her list was Delphi, who spent tens of thousands of dollars exposing their staff to this material. Lucky for me, I got to see the same videos they did for free! While I can no longer remember which presenter gave me what advice, the principles serve me well to this day.

## GETTING AWAY AND HAVING FUN

One thing I heard repeatedly from several: All successful CEOs and business professionals take vacations. It is the ultimate bullet train to burnout if you don’t take the time to “get away from it all,” clear your head and relax. Even though we all love our work and are passionate about what we do, we need to keep in mind WHY we’re doing it. Working with cool toys, making people happy and being one’s own boss are perks, not reasons. Those are at home; the significant other, the kid(s), the family, the lifestyle and hobbies, etc. This makes the time we spend at home “prime time,” and making a point to build-in some bonding experiences helps maintain a healthy, happy family. So no matter how small your budget may be, always plan some vacation time. It doesn’t have to be elaborate. If you can’t afford Disneyland or a cruise, there’s always a camping trip, or a bed and breakfast, etc.

Since I mentioned it already, don’t overlook hobbies. I can clearly remember a day when I realized that all I talked about was my DJ business. The gear, the music, the clients, my plans and on and on; the work consumed my life. I’d become quite one-dimensional. It was time for a change in the form of a hobby. Lucky for me, I once had a hobby that would later dovetail nicely with



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my DJ business that I decided to get re-acquainted with: the shooting sports. I also enjoy science-fiction, so I joined a group of fellow sci-fi nerds; our biweekly meetings help break up the monthly monotony. It's amazing how refreshed I feel getting back to work after even a brief respite. Fresh eyes lead to fresh solutions, fresh ideas and a fresh attitude.

The total opposite of "getting away from it all" is total immersion in the form

perspective.

## GETTING SOME PERSPECTIVE

When it comes to work, the down and dirty truth is that it IS work, and it's often not very fun at all. I know that I love performing at my events, but I never look forward to packing the truck, humping all the gear into the venue, setting it all up and then, after giving my audience

everything I've got, packing everything up and moving it all out, bone tired in the dark of night. How do you fight such a nemesis?

For me, it's all about attitude. As Mike "Dirty Jobs" Rowe likes to say, there is no such thing as bad work, and every job should be approached with humor and enthusiasm. After all, there is nothing worse than a tough job that you cannot find a way to laugh through it all. His website and blog, "Profoundly Disconnected" not only inspires, but is a daily reminder of just how good I, as a DJ, have it. No matter how tough a gig I've had, somebody makes a whole lot less money doing much harder work than I do. That I've managed to make a 35-year career out of what was once a hobby is astounding,

in retrospect, and the fact that I'm undergoing a total business makeover has also brought back much of the passion and drive that I felt when I first started out. This brings me to my final point: reinvention.

For every sustained business that

**It is the ultimate bullet train to burnout if you don't take the time to "get away from it all," clear your head and relax.**

has had a "second act," there has been a process of reinvention. I remember reading in *Rolling Stone* about Madonna "reinventing" herself with a new album, tour and, above all, an image makeover. Gone was the Cyndi Lauper-esque thrift store chic, to be replaced by the corset-clad vixen—unabashed and in-your-face. Some liked it, some hated it, but everyone, it seemed, was talking about it. And Madonna sold out wherever she went. Businesses do the same thing.

DJ forums buzz about different marketing strategies, and all contain elements, if not the complete package, of the makeover. Changing one's business name, motto/slogan, logo, website, etc., are all ways to keep things fresh. As Pharrell has said on *The Voice*, "The same is lame." If your marketing and image are looking like every other DJ in your market, or you're just plain bored with how you've packaged your business, maybe it's time to breathe some new life into things! Don't harbor any sacred cows—open anything and everything up to revision and innovation. From a small tweak to the logo to a full blown makeover, do what it takes to break free from doldrums and staleness. Because I guarantee you: if you're bored, then it shows.

And this brings me full-circle: if you're looking for some good ideas, inspiration, or even ways to avoid the pitfalls of a full-blown business makeover, then be sure to follow my articles here, and my blog posts at [Mobilebeat.com](http://Mobilebeat.com) entitled "From The Ground Up," as I rebuild my DJ business top to bottom!

Until next time, safe spinnin'. **MB**



of the working vacation. And yes, I'm talking about the DJ expos, seminars and workshops! These get you out of your own head and into the thoughts and ideas of your fellow professional colleagues. Sometimes the best medicine is a fresh



Stu Chisholm had been collecting music since he was about age 8 and began his DJ career in 1979. After a stint at the Specs Howard School of Broadcast Arts, he studied the DJ arts with famous Michigan broadcaster Bill Henning, interned at Detroit's rock powerhouse, WRIF, and later added voiceover work and club gigs at Detroit's best venues. He has shared his extensive DJ experience through MB columns, as a seminar speaker and through his book, *The Complete Disc Jockey: A Comprehensive Manual for the Professional DJ*.

**NOTE: In the swingin', swirlin' world of rebuilding one's business, I've come to find that there is a huge element of "hurry up and wait," and that the people you depend on for those things you cannot do for yourself tend to work at their own pace. For this reason, "From The Ground Up" will return next month.**



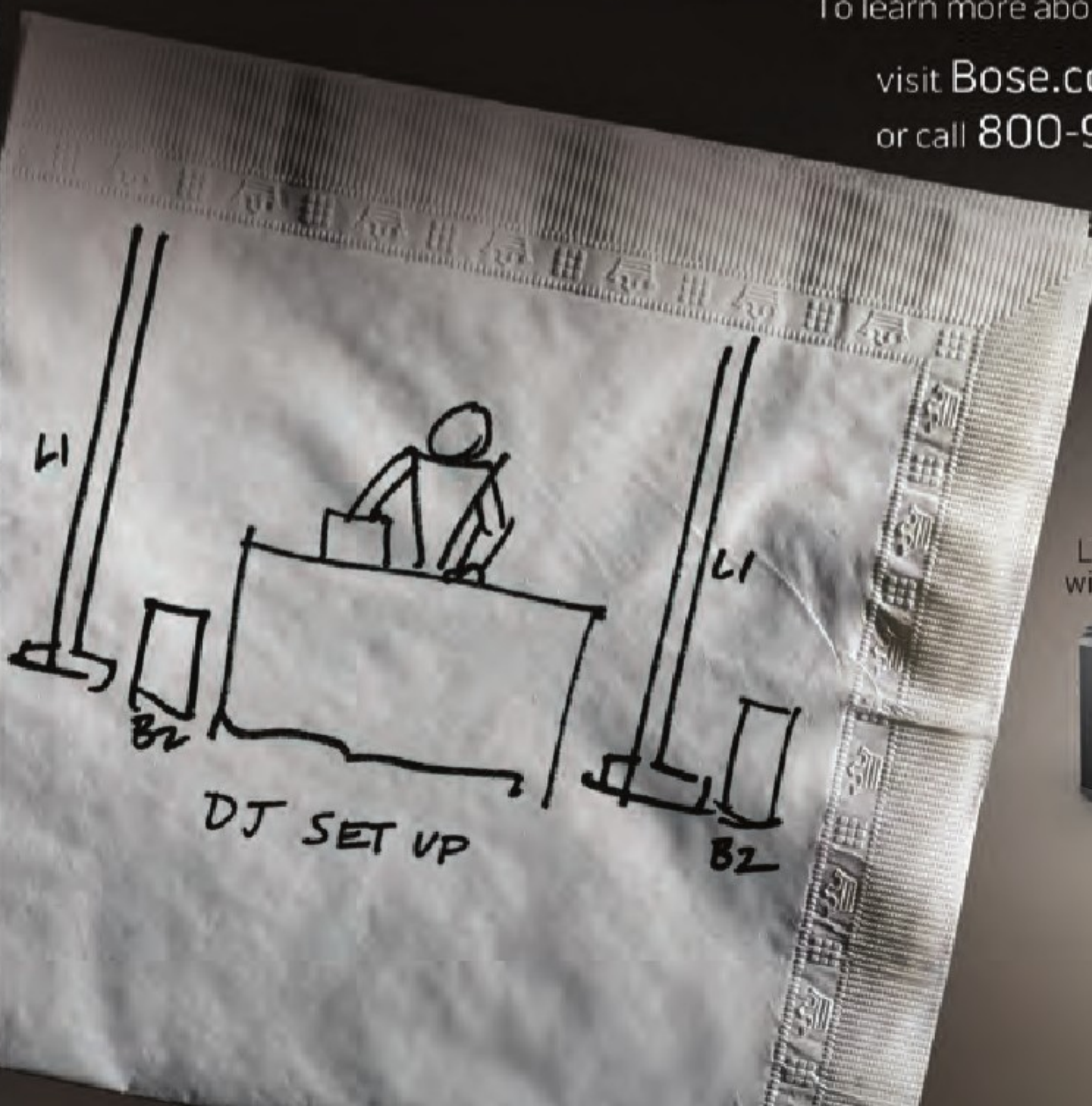
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# DJ Preparedness: What's Your Plan?

## HOW TO BE READY

By Joe Bunn

**Y**ou know how you go into a large building and blow off those signs that tell you where to go in case of an emergency? Or how about the flight attendants that you ignore when you travel?

Well, you should probably pay attention to them (or at least pretend to) because, they are telling you what to do in case of an EMERGENCY! I'm not here to chastise you though, I'm here to help you. As a DJ company owner, whether you have one DJ or twenty, you **MUST** have an emergency plan.

I won't go into all of the details, but I have spoken about my biggest nightmare gig before at a couple of DJ conferences. To sum it up, I was picked up in a golf cart on an island that doesn't allow cars. I was told that the island was flooded, but that the cart would make it through. What they didn't factor in was adding me at 170 pounds and several hundred pounds of gear. Long story short-the cart stalls, then goes, and my entire DJ rig dumps off the back into a swamp...two hours before my wedding gig. YIKES! Talk about a disaster.

So what did I do next? Well, I was able to salvage a couple of things, but I also had emergency things in the one bag that I had on my back, my "Emergency Kit" if you will. So what saved this gig? For one, I had my phone in my pocket with the Mobile Beat Top 200 in a playlist, as well as a huge 160GB iPod classic with almost my entire catalog in it. My mixer still worked (sort of) so I was able to crossfade between those two sources. Was I able to beat mix? No, but nobody seemed to mind. I also lost my wireless mic, but guess what was in the DJ backpack? A

trusty corded Shure SM58. And all of this went through one Bose L1 tower and one B1 bass bin that I was able to dry out before the gig. Not only did the guests and bride and groom have a blast, not one of them knew anything was wrong until they read my blog the week after the wedding!

So, that's my personal emergency plan, but what about for those of you with multiple DJs? What if a DJ gets sick or has an accident on the way to the show? Do you have an emergency plan to make sure that your client is taken care of? Two summers ago, I was sitting in a movie theatre with my two sons when I got an urgent "CALL ME" text from one of my best DJs. I tell my guys to leave me alone on the weekends unless they *really* need something for their show, and so I knew this was bad. It turns out that he had pulled a back muscle and was laying face down on his kitchen floor. Not only could he not move, but he couldn't load his gear or get to his gig. This would have been a HUGE problem if I didn't have an emergency plan! But what did I do? I walked out of the theatre, looked at the calendar on my iPhone and figured out exactly who was not working that day and then I started going down the list calling each one until I found an open DJ. I said "Suit up man, Greg is hurt, and I need you to cover his gig". Without flinching, my other DJ says "I'm on the way." The other way to insure that you could cover a gig is to always leave one of your DJs open and make them the "on-call" guy for that weekend.

Now, how does the replacement DJ know what their first dance is, who is giving a toast, etc.? That part is simple! You can either give your DJs the master login for your DJ booking software (DJIntelligence, DJEventPlanner, etc.) or just email them the information they need on the way to the gig.

At the end of the day, my "backup DJ" made it to that gig, on time, ready to go, dressed the part, and even though the bride was disap-



## Emergency Kit Checklist

- Wired microphone (preferably Shure SM58)
- Smartphone Charger
- Extra Laptop Charger
- Velcro Wraps
- 3" black gaff tape
- Batteries (AA or 9V)
- Battery life tester
- Extra XLR cables
- Extra USB cable
- Pens
- Small pad of paper
- Business cards and holder
- Spare headphones or earbuds
- Adapters of all sorts and sizes
- Extra 1/8 inch to RCA for iPod
- Snacks (example: peanuts, granola bar, mints)
- Back up CDs or iPod of top 200 and dinner/cocktail music
- Small tool kit or Leatherman (pliers, blade, wire cutter)
- Grounding plug adapter
- Back up Serato control CDs or Vinyl (for those still using Serato box)

pointed that her chosen DJ couldn't make it, my guy still did an amazing job and everyone had a blast! Save!

The bottom line is this, things can and will go wrong, in this business like any other. Be prepared for the worst, don't panic, and do whatever it takes to pull off the show. I'm sure you all have "war stories" of your own and I hope you'll share them with me in February at MBLV! **MB**



Joe Bunn started his DJ career at age 14, when his mom drove him to gigs in her wood-paneled Jeep Wagoneer. His company now does about 400 weddings a year and another 200+ private, corporate and charity events. He has been on the board of both ISES and NACE, founded the Triangle DJ Association, and has also won numerous industry awards. Recently, he has been helping other DJs grow their businesses as a consultant. He has also presented at major industry events including MBLV. For more info go to [www.bunndjcompany.com](http://www.bunndjcompany.com).



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# Trivia History

SOME TRIVIA ABOUT TRIVIA, FOR THOSE WHO REALLY WANT TO KNOW IT ALL

By William Lund

**W**hat is “trivia” and where did it originate? The first recorded use of the word “trivial” in English occurred around 1589. “Trivium” was used in reference to the study of the liberal arts, and indicated “insignificance” in that certain facts were considered to be “only of interest to graduate students.” Gradually, “trivia” came to mean any information that is of little or fleeting importance and of general interest. The term now represents little bits of information that, for all intents and purposes, are insignificant to most people.

## TRIVIA AT HOME

The first book to record this “trivial” information was titled *Trivia* and was published in 1966 by Dell. It was written by authors Edwin Goodgold and Dan Carlinsky. It was very popular, and it landed a spot on the New York Times Best Sellers list. Later, more successful trivia related books came along such as *The Trivia Encyclopedia* in 1974, *The Complete Unabridged Super Trivia Encyclopedia* in 1977, and *Super Trivia, Vol. II* in 1981. All of these books were published by Fred L. Worth, a former air traffic controller from California. The success of these trivia books, and the success of trivia quiz shows such as Columbia’s University’s Trivia

Contest, led up to the marketing of the popular game, *Trivial Pursuit*, in the early 1980s.

*Trivial Pursuit* was invented by Scott Abbott and Chris Haney. Finding pieces of their *Scrabble* game missing, they decided to create their own game. With the help of John Haney and Ed Werner, they released the game to the public in 1982. In 1984 over 20 million copies of the game *Trivial Pursuit* were sold in North America alone. In 1988, the game was licensed to Parker Brothers, and by 2004 almost 88 million games had been sold, in 26 countries and 17 languages.

## BIG TIME TRIVIA

In 1954 television was beginning to become a central item in many households. The *\$64,000 Question*, *Twenty-One* and *Beat The Clock* were some of the quiz shows to hit the tube in the 1950s. The American public tuned in to these and many other quiz shows, drawn in by the appeal of the large cash prizes for contestants who had the greatest amount knowledge.

However, Between 1956 and 1958, it began to emerge that many of these popular quiz shows had been rigged. Trials of key figures in the quiz shows followed, and brought out evidence that showed many of the game show winners had been given the answers prior to their appearance on the show. This marked the end of the first major quiz show era.

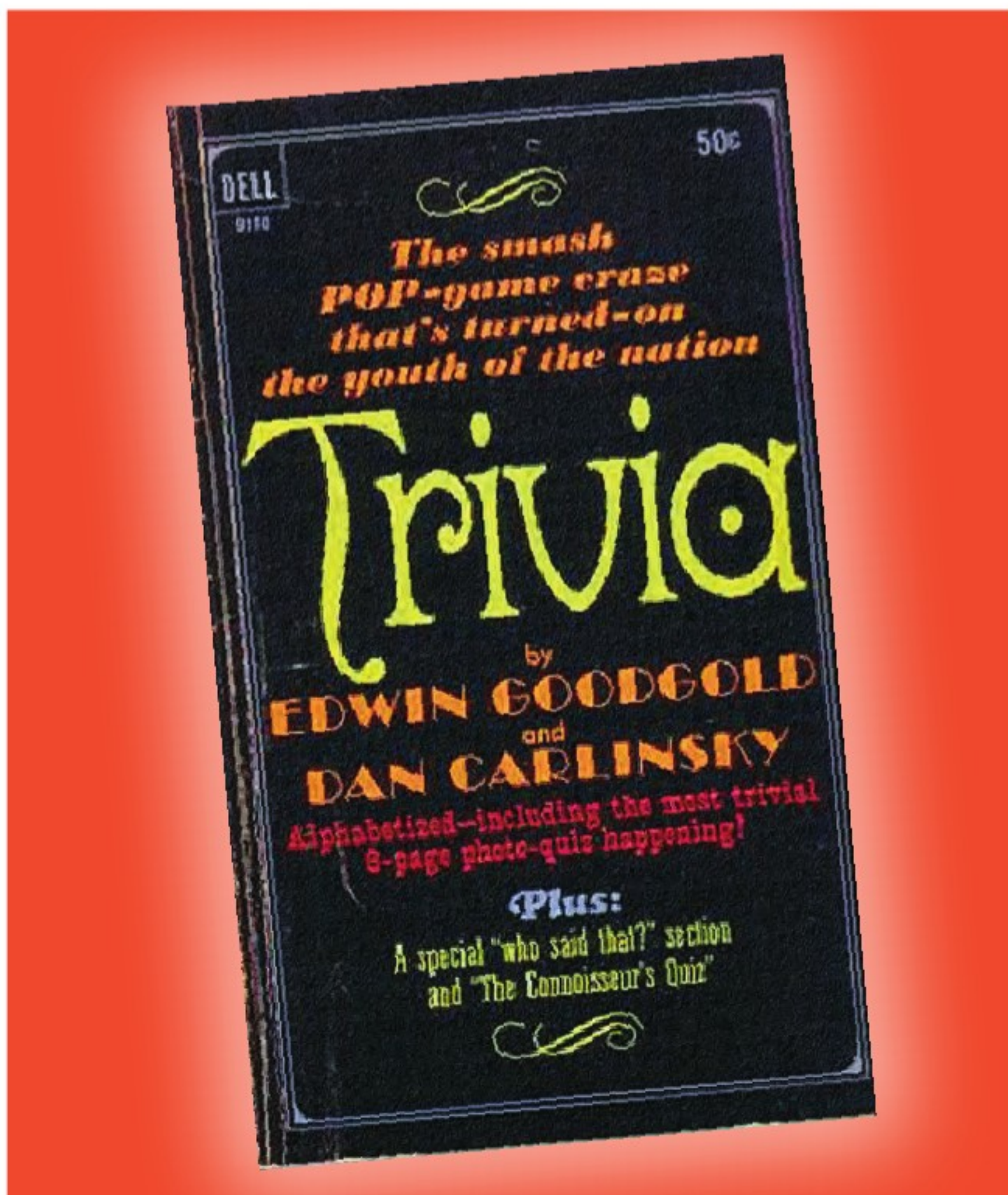
The introduction of *Jeopardy* in 1964 helped bring back the game show, and restoring the American people’s trust in the game show industry. Limits on prize money, as well as rigid guidelines for who a contestant could have contact with prior to the show guaranteed that the winners would win fairly. The original ran for 11 years before it was canceled in 1975. *Jeopardy* was brought back in 1984, when Alex Trebek became its host. Since then *Jeopardy* has had a continuous run for 24 years and counting.

Public fascination with trivia ranges from books and board games, through TV and radio, to internet sites. New kinds of video games, cell phone games, and downloadable forms of trivia are being released to the public every day. Interactive games can be played from restaurants, bars, and other public locations.

Today, the most popular format is the four-answer multiple choice quiz, while some hardcore trivia fans like to answer the question without being able to choose between existing answers. Online you can find plenty of trivia questions with answers, and there is no shortage of trivia games that you can play online. You can even play trivia games for real money on some sites.

And finally, with the software and performance gear provided by companies like DigiGames, DJs can join in the trivia fun, and profit by filling the public’s demand for trivia game experiences. **MB**

*William Lund has been an inventor for over 35 years and a webmaster since 1998.*





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AC DC - Thunder Struck	2pa - California Love	Dixie Chicks - Goodbye Earl	Foreigner - Juke Box Hero	Billy Ray Cyrus - Achy Breaky Heart
Eagles - Life In The Fast Lane	Bobby Darren - Mac The Knife	Billy Squire - The Stroke	Bon Jovi - You Give Love A Bad Name	Brooks and Dunn - My Maria
Brooks and Dunn - Boot Scootin Boogie ...	Def Leppard - Pour Some Sugar On Me	Tommy Tutone 867-5309	Billy Joel - You May Be Right	Alabama - If Your Gonna Play In Texas
Afroman - Cause I Got High	Abba - Dancing Queen	Bob Dylan - Stuck in the Middle With You	Big & Rich - Save A Horse (Ride A Cowboy)	Buster Poindexter - Hot Hot Hot
Beatles - Obladi, Oblada, Life Goes On	Cars - Let the Good Times Roll	C and C Music Factory - Gonna Make You Sweat	ABBA - Take A Chance On Me	Carrie Underwood - Before He Cheats

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# How to Create an Iron-Clad Wedding Agenda

WHEN IT COMES TO INFO, MORE IS ALWAYS BETTER

By Staci Nichols

**A** quick online search of DJ questionnaires would show that many of us are getting nothing more than song titles, times, and names from our clients before stepping into our crucial roles on their big days. Yet a better wedding agenda clearly equals a better wedding DJ. This is good for our reputations as a whole.

Here are a few ways to make your agendas more “iron-clad”—and your performances stronger.

## 1. DON'T JUST RELY ON DJ PROGRAMS

I have DJ Event Planner and can't imagine life without it, and I know many swear by DJ Intelligence. However, I encourage you to refine and edit the data these programs collect, based on your style, your clients, your area, or your specialty. For example, one of my specialties is country music and dancing, so I ask my country couples which line dances they know so I can be sure to play those specific songs, have the counts ready, or find out which “Tush Push” song is their favorite.

*Tip: After each wedding, go back over your questionnaire and add or update it to make the data you gather as tailored, streamlined, and specific as possible.*

## 2. PERSONALLY INTERVIEW ALL CLIENTS

The foundation of a good wedding agenda is knowing your clients. The wedding I did last Saturday was of two Princeton PhDs. Had I not gotten to know them and their love story, I would have been very baffled by them deciding not to have a dance floor (among other things). Even if you work for a company that assigns you a wedding just a few days in advance, pick up the phone and personally go over the details with the clients. Ask them if they have any questions for you.

*Tip: Even if you have clients fill out all of their planning information online, still take the time to personally go over the details, offering your expertise and input.*

## 3. GET THE DETAILS

Does the couple want their First Dance faded out early? Why was this particular song chosen for the Father-Daughter Dance? What are the wedding colors? Do they like the YMCA? Will the meal be buffet, plated, or food stations? Will the coordinator be dismissing tables or will you be? Should you take requests? Does the couple want R-rated music? Will the cake be near the dance floor or off in a distant corner? Would they prefer a night club look with the dance floor lighting or just a few low-key spotlights? Is a family member going to be playing a live song and expecting to hook into your mixing board? How many guests will there be? What time is the photographer leaving? And so on.

*Tip: The devil is in the details. The more you ask, the better job you can do. Period.*

## 4. PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As you might have guessed, the foundation of an iron-clad wedding agenda is the research, not the writing. But here's what to include for a truly infallible agenda:

- Your cell number as well as the cell numbers of any other vendors who will be present during the wedding. More than once, my agenda was the only place where a late violinist or singer's phone number could be located.

- Order of activities as well as events that must start at a set time (dinner). For events that are back-to-back, I find putting an arrow to indicate it will immediately follow the previous event is more useful than just allowing 5 minutes for each activity, which is typically very inaccurate (No = 7:00 First Dance, 7:05 Father-Daughter Dance, 7:10 Mother-Son Dance. Yes = 7:00 First Dance > Father-Daughter

Dance > Mother-Son Dance).

- Include checklists to remind yourself of what you should be planning or prepping at any given moment. (Ex. 8:30 Open Dancing, \_Place chair on dance floor for garter removal, 9:30 Garter Removal).

- Have the client TELL you over the phone or in person all of names of wedding party members and other important people who will be mentioned, and write them down phonetically. Use your version of phonetic spellings in your agenda to ensure proper name pronunciations.

- Write a script for the wedding's major announcements instead of winging it. (Ex. “Ladies and gentleman, on Christmas Eve, Cheryl unwrapped a small box from under the tree. When she looked up from the box, Jeff was on his knee in front of her with one very important question to ask. She said yes, and, for that reason, we are here today welcoming them to the dance floor for the first time as husband and wife,” rather than “Ladies and gentlemen, the First Dance.”) Creating a script comforts so many couples who fear you may come down with diarrhea of the mouth or have a penchant for inappropriate one-liners.

- Put everything on one master document rather than having a separate time line document, a separate playlist, a separate script of announcements, etc. It's easier for the couple to proofread and easier for you to find things in a pinch.

- Paste a copy of the wedding layout at the end of your agenda.

*Tip: Following these guidelines, you can expect to invest 3-4 hours in putting the first draft of the agenda together. If your current price doesn't justify that type of prep work, raise it!*

Additionally, we should take a cue from the Wedding Entertainment Director's Guild and send our versions of the wedding agendas out to other vendors and introduce ourselves well before the wedding day.

When I go to bridal shows, I put a stack of old wedding agendas on the table. They sell themselves! The high level of planning, attention-to-detail, and customization puts many minds at ease. Don't tell a bride, “You can trust me not to screw up your big day.” Show her! Furthermore, if we want day-of coordinators to stop babysitting us, we need to be using iron-clad agendas to show them we are on top of things. **MB**



DJ and Minister Staci Nichols owns Revolution Weddings and Country Wedding DJ in southern California. Her wedding know-how has appeared on Wed Loft, Offbeat Bride, the Gig Masters Wedding Blog, and Brides Without Borders. She is available for DJ consulting with a focus on helping her male counterparts make their websites/services more bride-friendly.





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## CROWDPLEASER

# What Is Different About Today?

CONTRAST YOUR PROFICIENCY WITH THEIR UNFAMILIARITY

By Mike Ficher

In most of our lives, routines are the norm: shuttling children to school, going to work, putting out the garbage, cleaning the house, purchasing groceries, completing household chores, working in the yard, preparing meals—activities that we perform over and over, every day.

In the wacky world of improvisation, performers often seek to establish “the normal world” of the scene, then funnel a character or two through a significant change or morph the overall status quo into a bizarre, evolving diorama—a very different “today.”

Now think about a wedding. How often does one get married? Well, if you are Mickey Rooney, Elizabeth Taylor or Jerry Lee Lewis, as frequently as you buy a car. But, for rest of us, the wedding ceremony and reception is a once in a lifetime event.

When you frame a wedding in the context of the “what is different about today?” world of improvisation, for the participants, a wedding is as much a jolt to the normal order of things as a death or a birth.

### WORKING FOR THE WEEKEND

Weddings are not normally what people do in a given day—a quantum leap from the usual realm of everyday living.

The groom wears a tuxedo, the bride a formal gown she will don only once and store in a closet, perhaps to be used by her daughter someday. The family, from parents to cousins to rarely-seen relatives gather at one place, at one time (often dragging emotional baggage, long-simmering resentments, and unresolved dilemmas in with them), along with assorted co-workers, neighbors and life-long friends.

A facility is secured, meal service is tendered, entertainment is contracted, extensive preparations are often undertaken to ensure the vision of this singular day is realized—activities not typically engaged during a client’s busy life.

### GROUNDHOG DAY

Contrast the participants’ experience with that of the mobile entertainer. Mobile entertainers entertain. That is our job, our passion, our choice. DJs may perform at dozens annually, with many veterans logging more than a thousand weddings during their careers. For entertainers, the experience of a wedding reception is, in many ways, a “normal” day.

Embrace that fundamental distinction: It is one of your key allies in understanding the stress, anxiety, exclusiveness and excitement attendant to the event for all involved, particularly the bride.

The day is special to the participants not only because of the reason for the celebration—exchanging vows—but

because the day is so radically divergent from a typical day in their lives.

As an entertainer, how does that perspective impact your approach to events?

Each event is unique. Yet during my varied mobile entertainment career, my wife heard many similar bits, jokes and one-liners at a wide range of events. When she commented about hearing scraps of related material, I offered that, for any given audience (experiencing a particularly unique “day in the life”), the bit was actually fresh and new.

In the same vein, while we may tire of hearing some of the same popular songs or executing comparable bits (i.e. cake cutting, introductions, dance instruction), for the audience, the activity is special, unique and, typically, out of their ordinary sphere of experience.

While your frame of reference may be “this is the hundredth time I’ve heard this song or done this bit this year”, for your guests, the observation point may be “wow, I really enjoyed that cool game. That was fun!”

### TAKE IT EASY

Understand the stress. Weddings are a perfect storm: significant financial investment, family dynamics, emotional commitment. Add that to the fact that brides, grooms, families and friends are often on an unprecedented journey, and you have a stress factor living in the red.

The challenge for the entertainer emerges in executing the performance to match the vision amidst this sensitive, potentially volatile stew while projecting confidence, competence and calm.

Respect the significance. Each event is critical to each client. That understanding is accompanied by varying sets of expectations and goals. The mobile entertainer is an actor, comic, DJ, producer, game master, dancer, magician, hypnotist, and part-time psychiatrist wrapped into an energetic, fluid presence. Within that context, the mobile entertainer is one of the reasons the event is special—how often do people hire entertainment in their everyday lives?

Be creative, empathize with a client, offer your best effort, focus on the goals of the event—your guests’ special day will be memorable and, hopefully, a topic of joyful discussion at the next family get together.

So, what is different about today? **MB**



A business analyst by day, Mike Ficher is an actor, voice artist, MC, sportscaster, public address announcer and former mobile entertainer. He is also the host of the weekly syndicated radio program, *The Ultimate Oldies Show*. Mike synthesizes these varied experiences to illuminate historic connectivity and fresh perspectives on the mobile entertainment profession. More info at [mikeficher.com](http://mikeficher.com).



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# "It's Not My Fault!"

DON'T MAKE EXCUSES—BE PREPARED TO MAKE THE RECEPTION GREAT

By Paul Kida, The DJ Coach

**You just can't believe it! Nothing seems to be going right for you at this event. People seem distracted and uninterested in the whole affair. The usually packed dance floor is devoid of the fun-loving crowd. The planned flow of events is not grabbing the attention of the crowd. Everything is seemingly spinning out of control. What in the world is going on? You're usual command of the wedding reception is just not making it with the impact that it normally does. Is it your fault alone, or could there be some other major factors that you may have overlooked that are affecting your typically stellar performance?**

## PREPARATION

First of all, take a look at yourself. Did you truly prepare for this event, or did you just go through the motions of getting basic information without really getting to know the bride and groom? In this day and age of digital communication, we often forget that there is still an amount of personal touch that is needed. After all, a wedding reception is about people celebrating a special event. It is about people sharing their love and support with the newlyweds. True, we can easily get certain information through texting and e-mails, but there are some things you can only get through personal contact. That look on the faces of the couple as they discuss what song to use for their first dance, the tone and inflection of their voices, their body language, a smile or a frown, are all factors that can give us a little more insight on just who the bride and groom really are as people. Whether by a personal meeting or maybe Skype, a bit of one-on-one can

go a long way in increasing your understanding of what our clients really want.

Once we have this information, it is imperative that we use it. We never want to just "wing it" with minimal preparation. Whether we have done one wedding or one thousand weddings, we all need to remember that our clients deserve our best every single time. That means work

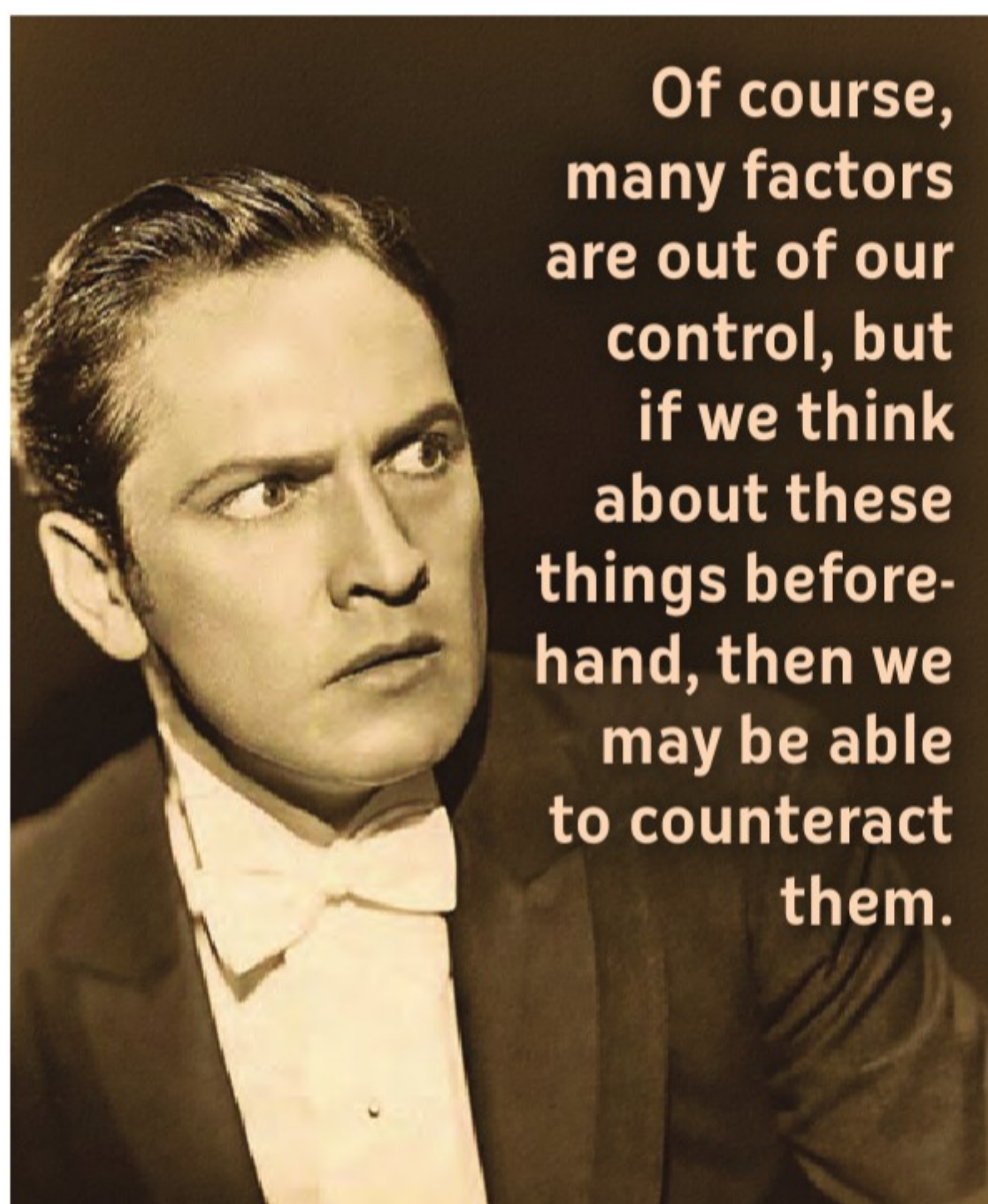
wedding receptions being about people. We also talked about personally knowing your clients, the bride and groom. What about the others at the celebration? Family, friends, and other guests should not be overlooked. During the cocktail hour and dinner, do you passively remain behind your DJ booth, or do you proactively take this time to tactfully speak to those in attendance? By simply asking the guests what kind of music they like, and taking down any requests they have (then actually playing them, if appropriate), we can easily gauge what kind of crowd we have. This really helps us to prepare for the night of dancing by getting a grasp on what kind of music will keep them on the dance floor.

## SITUATIONS

We have considered some the things that we can do to make the wedding reception a success but might there be some outside influences that can negatively affect the day's festivities?

There are a few things that we should be aware of that may have a less than favorable impact on the reception. It is a common trend today for photographers to actually take the bride, groom and sometimes, the whole family out of the reception for "a few more photographs." While this may make a great addition to

the wedding album, think of what it can mean for a dance floor already filled with a hundred people having a great time. Take away twenty people, and suddenly, it seems pretty empty! The energy in the room is depleted and it makes it a perfect time for other guests to leave. This has definitely been a trend here in the Denver area as of late. Something that can really help you is to make it a point to speak to the bride and groom BEFOREHAND about this trend. Of course, we can never infringe on their desires for the evening, but tactfully explaining to them that having this many people leave for an hour or so right when the party gets started



on our part! Creating the proper song list, rehearsing and pronouncing names ahead of time, generating a cohesive, flowing, simple timeline, notifying the other vendors that you will be working with, preparing appropriate lighting and all of the other myriads of details should never be overlooked.

We've previously talked about



*Paul Kida, The DJ Coach, is a founding member of the Colorado Disc Jockey Association. He owns JAMMCATTS DJ Entertainment ([www.jammcatts.com](http://www.jammcatts.com)), and is a regular speaker at Mobile Beat DJ Shows.*



will only encourage others to take their leave. Let it be their decision to explain to the photographer that they need the family portraits done before the reception begins so that they can relax and have a great party. Let them know that the old saying, "Where the bride and groom go, so goes the party" is really true. If they leave the dance floor for a long period of time, so will the guests. Talking this over with the bride and groom ahead of time has helped me a lot. As my wife says (she used to be a wedding photographer) "If they are good photographers, they will already have the posed shots done before they ever get to the reception!"

Some other factors that come into play can be proper ventilation in the facility, the time of day and day of the week of the reception, even the weather. Here in the beautiful Rocky Mountains, people love to have outside weddings, but the weather can change from hour to hour. Remind them that it is always good to have a back-up plan in case of bad weather.

Of course, many of the above factors are out of our control, but if we think



about these things beforehand, then we may be able to counteract them to some degree. Be prepared to have different forms of group activities and/or dances. Maybe even some trivia questions about the newlyweds can help keep a crowd having a good time.

Remember also that sometimes people just want to enjoy just "hanging out" with one another, especially if it is an older crowd. A few years ago, I did a wedding that I felt was a complete bust by the end of the evening. There were a few people that were constantly on the dance floor, but many seemed content to sit and talk, even though they would participate in some group dances that I used throughout the evening. Surprisingly, the bride came up to me at the end and complimented me on the great job I had

done. She said that so many of the guests hadn't seen each other for years, and they simply wanted to share good conversation and good music that brought back many fond memories. She said that their guests enjoyed the music and activities immensely and that they couldn't be happier. It taught me that sometimes what we perceive to be a failure really is not. It may be just how the client wanted it to be.

To wrap up, be diligent in all of your preparation and try to foresee any problems that might arise, and remember that having the "personal" touch will never be out of style no matter how impersonal communication may become. Most of all, care about your clients, their guests and simply do your best. No one can ask for more than that. **MB**

*Please send any comments on this article or suggestions for future articles or questions to [djcoach@mobilebeat.com](mailto:djcoach@mobilebeat.com).*



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# Dreaming

## of the Perfect Reception

By Jay Maxwell

One of the life lessons that I have tried to teach my children is to strive for excellence instead of striving for perfection, since perfection is nearly impossible to achieve. Regardless of how hard one tries to get every detail right, there always seems to be a way to improve the next time. If perfection is by definition, “something that cannot be improved,” then disappointment awaits anyone who typically expects perfection.

It is understandable that most brides dream of the perfect wedding. However, I have heard very few brides say that their day was perfect. There is a good chance, though, that a recent wedding was certainly the “dream come true” for one bride. The ceremony and reception were one for the storybooks. Her only request of us was that the music be appropriate for the occasion.

Of course every bride requests that the music be appropriate for the occasion, but this bride was particularly concerned because of her father’s position in the community. Her dad was a pastor of a conservative congregation and she wanted to make sure that no song was played that was even slightly suggestive. Even her father reminded me during the setup that we needed to be sensitive to the lyrics and message of the songs so that no one would be upset or embarrassed by the music played. Fortunately, my background and Christian faith was identical to theirs, so

I knew the criteria they were wanted me to adhere to and had planned the music list accordingly.

A brief description of the reception area needs to be portrayed to give you a mental picture of the perfect setting for this event. The bride wanted to get married in a traditional country church. Though her father was a pastor, the church she got married in was not the one he led, but a beautiful church, over 100 years old, located in a tiny town several miles away from Charleston, SC. On one side of the church was an open field that had been converted into the reception area; it looked like it could have been straight out of the late 1800s due to its simplicity and charm. Dozens of tables were set up in the center of the field, strings of lights had been stretched overhead, and the dance floor had been hand-built by the couple the day before. Several couches had been constructed by draping cloths over arranged bales of hay. A large

### Contemporary Christian Dinner Playlist

ORDER PLAYED	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	YOUR LOVE	SHANE & SHANE
2	BEAUTIFUL	MERCYME
3	I WILL BE HERE	STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
4	LOVE NEVER FAILS	BRANDON HEATH
5	UNFAILING LOVE	JIMMY NEEDHAM
6	WHEN I SAY I DO	MATTHEW WEST
7	LET’S GROW OLD TOGETHER	LANAE’ HALE
8	THE ONE YOU NEED	SHANE & SHANE
9	I CAN ONLY IMAGINE	MERCYME
10	BEAUTIFUL ONE	JEREMY CAMP
11	LOVE COME TO LIFE	BIG DADDY WEAVE
12	MIRACLE OF YOU	STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
13	WALKING HER HOME	MARK SCHULTZ
14	ALL OF CREATION	MERCYME
15	WHEN GOD MADE YOU	NEWSONG / NATALIE GRANT
16	COURAGEOUS	CASTING CROWNS
17	HOLD YOU UP	MATTHEW WEST
18	THIS DAY	JADON LAVIK
19	OUR GOD IS GREATER	SHANE & SHANE
20	THE PROOF OF YOUR LOVE	FOR KING & COUNTRY
21	GREATER	MERCYME
22	PARENT’S PRAYER	STEVEN CURTIS CHAPMAN
23	FREE TO BE ME	FRANCESCA BATTISTELLI
24	MARRIAGE PRAYER	JOHN WALLER
25	I’M IN LOVE WITH YOU	JOY WILLIAMS
26	FOLLOW YOU	LEELAND
27	HOLD US TOGETHER	MATT MAHER
28	ALWAYS FOREVER	PHIL WICKHAM
29	FALLEN IN LOVE	DARLENE MCCOY
30	BLESS THE BROKEN ROAD	SELAH & MELODIE CRITTENDEN



mirror was hanging from an oak branch directly behind the cake table to give a reflection of the wedding cake. Tables that were set up with family pictures of the parents, grandparents, and other relatives were enhanced with charming birdhouses shaped like miniature churches. It was sixty degrees and only blue skies could be seen on this fall day.



Mobile Beat's resident musicologist since 1992 (issue #11), Jay Maxwell runs the multi-talent entertainment company, Jay Maxwell's Music by Request, LLC, in Charleston, South Carolina. He is also a professor of Business at Charleston Southern University. His passion for detail and continuous research of clients' requests can be found not only in this column, but also in his annually updated music guide, **Play Something We Can Dance To**.

bride gave a short welcome and blessed the food.

Next, during the meal, the music that I had selected was contemporary Christian music (see this issue's list for the ordered playlist). The playlist was actually fairly easy to compile. We have had several events where the first dance was by a Christian artist and

After I set up my equipment, the pastor of this particular church further explained the significance of this plot of land. The area for the reception was the same spot that Easter "sunrise service" was held each year. That is why there was a permanent cross at the far end of the property. In front of the cross was the table where the bride and groom would enjoy their first meal as husband and wife. Beyond the cross was nothing but the marshland of coastal Carolina. The scene was perfect, one that man alone could never create.

For the social hour, the couple had friends play guitar and sing for the hour the wedding party was busy taking pictures. After I introduced the wedding party with the *Chariots of Fire* theme in the background, they went right into their first dance, followed by the bride-father and then groom-mother dances. During the bride-father dance, we invited all other fathers who were there with their daughter to join them on the dance floor. It was amazing how many dads were there to take their daughter to the dance floor, including Mom dancing with the bride's grandfather. After the special dances, the father of the

have had couples who requested Christian music for their events in the past. This couple only requested the genre, not specific songs. The bride and her father were extremely pleased with the songs played. Several guests also complemented the playlist and one gentlemen asked for our card for his daughter's upcoming wedding. After 34 years in the mobile disc jockey business, I never get tired of someone asking for our card.!

The biggest surprise of the night was that after the toasts and cake cutting, when the dance phase started, people flocked to the dance floor. Many times at an event, one expects that alcohol is required to give people the "liquid" courage needed to entice them to the dance floor. Not a drop of beer, wine, or liquor was in sight for miles, but none was needed. From the moment the first guest set foot on the floor until the end of the night, the dance floor always had dancers stomping their feet in time to the beat of the music. Best of all, no one even had to come to the DJ booth and yell, "Play Something We Can Dance To!" **MB**

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# Wish Upon a Wedding

A NEW WAY FOR DJS TO GIVE BACK

By Ryan Burger



**W**ish Upon a Wedding was started in 2010 with a goal of providing dream weddings vow renewals to couples who are facing terminal illness and other serious life-altering events. It was started by event planner Liz Guthrie in the San Francisco Bay area when she felt inspired at her home in San Jose to help people. She grew up in a family that had always been of a giving kind, starting with her mom, who she says “is the most courageous, innovative and amazing person” she knows.

As she developed her event planning business, she was looking for an innovative way to get some attention in the market. She started the San Francisco Dream Wedding Giveaway, which attracted way more entries than she expected. After realizing that there were many people who, for various reasons, couldn’t create their own “dream weddings,” she was inspired to start a non-profit organization, Wish Upon a Wedding. Liz worked with caterers, destinations, photographers and other vendors—any people that are important in the production of a wedding and wedding reception.

Which brings us to one of the most important parts of any reception—especially a “dream” event—the DJ. Listen to some entertainers describe their Wish Upon a Wedding experiences, first-hand:

**TARA FEELEY**  
**TARA FEELEY**  
**ENTERTAINMENT,**  
**NEW JERSEY**

As a wedding DJ, I get the honor of meeting and working with so many couples who are always reminding me of what true love really is. After having known and worked with Melissa and Chris, I can tell you this couple that is a true example of what “real commitment” is all about.

After close to 15 years together, their lives have certainly been full of smiles and jubilation, but also many trials and tribulations, including Melissa’s being diagnosed with a rare form of eye cancer. This family has been through some challenges, and at times during Melissa’s treatment, plenty of scares as well. After their daughter Gianna’s loving persistence in wanting to “...see mommy and daddy fall in love again and get married” so she could be the flower girl at their wedding, on a whim, Melissa filled out an application for Wish Upon a Wedding. Never imagining they would pick her and Chris to celebrate their 10th anniversary with a vow renewal wedding reception, she was shocked when the call came in that they had been selected.

Their wish was granted exactly 10 years to the day from when they were wed!



**JEFF HOLMES**  
**MOONDANCE MOBILE MUSIC, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

As a husband, father DJ, I take great pride in my family and business. I'm so grateful for the health of not only myself but for my family members.

As DJs, we get to be a part of these fabulous weddings every weekend. But some people are just not as fortunate as many of our clients, and that is where Wish Upon a Wedding comes in. I was completely honored to have been involved with one special fulfilled wedding wish.

The couple had been together for a while and had a few kids already, but had never gotten married. He had only a little time remaining and they really wanted to have a wedding, not only for themselves, but for their kids to remember and enjoy. It was a really moving day and something I am very proud to have been a part of. Unfortunately the groom did pass away only a couple months later. Very sad, but because of Wish Upon a Wedding, the family has a wonderful memory of that day. I would volunteer again in a heart beat!

**MARY ANN ROSS**  
**MARY ANN PRODUCTIONS, MICHIGAN**

Every once in a while an opportunity presents itself to us to feel we matter—to put our healthy DJ egos aside and truly matter to a couple on their wedding day. After 26 years at a job I

**“Being a Wish Granter is a humbling, profoundly moving experience” – Jim Cerone**

continue to love, I was given a rare and wonderful opportunity to celebrate with Konnie and John on their Wish Upon a Wedding Day.

Konnie is that bride every DJ loves. She trusts you, listens and appreciates you and is remarkably “happy” through it all. You forget she’s sick. Konnie was diagnosed with an invisible, chronic, degenerative brain disease called Chiari Malformation. This rare disease causes pressure on the spinal cord and blocks the flow of cerebral fluid. Her husband couldn’t handle it anymore which was a blessing because when you watched John and Konnie together on their wedding day they were truly meant to be.

From start to finish I walked around with this big lump in my throat; not because Konnie was sick but because despite of being sick she could teach the class on how to be the grateful, happy bride. We shuffled, we wobbled, we cried when she danced with her sons, and we even had the crazy drunk relative—much like any other Saturday night in

the life of a wedding DJ. What made the day so gratifying was the gift of Konnie. She is a rare and fabulous presence in a life that at times can be missing the kindness and appreciation of others. I am convinced if attitude alone could beat her disease she would be healthy forever.

There is one big thing that Wish Upon a Wedding is looking for at this time from you, the readers of Mobile Beat, and that is being a registered Wish Granter. You start by checking out [WishUponAWedding.Org](http://WishUponAWedding.Org) and filling out their forms online. And then spread the word among other wedding vendors in your area. You could go as far as starting an official chapter in the area and actively seeking out events you can collaborate on to the benefit of couples facing these issues.

That’s how I heard about Wish Upon a Wedding, from its Indianapolis Chapter VP, Jim Cerone. He told us that “There is no better use of our individual talent and experience than to give back to our community...Being a Wish Granter is a humbling, profoundly moving experience.”

As Liz Guthrie told us “I’ve often said that we are changing history. While we may not be changing the history of the world, we have definitely already changed the history of weddings.”

Please check out [WishUponAWedding.Org](http://WishUponAWedding.Org), become a Wish Granter and spread the word. The more companies in your area that are registered to do this, the better the chances are that you will be able to help create experiences like the ones the DJs quoted here have made possible. **MB**





# Workshopping with Mark Ferrell

INDUSTRY LEADER HELPS DJS BUILD SKILLS

By Staci Nichols

**W**hen I saw that Mark Ferrell was having a beginner-level workshop not just on my home continent but within driving distance of my house, I signed up about ten seconds later! I've been a Mark Ferrell groupie for a while now and thought it was about time I put my money where my mouth was. The fact that Wedding Entertainment Directors Mitch Taylor and Dave Ternier and fellow female DJ Vickie Musni were going to be in my Bronze MC workshop was a 5-pound cherry on top.

I was lucky enough to attend a high school with a 100-person speech and debate team that traveled throughout the US competing on a national-level and then earn a debate schol-



L-R: Mike Lupo, Vicki Musni, Staci Nichols, Mitch Taylor, Brad Borchardt, Robert Kusters, Dave Ternier, Mark Ferrell.

arship to a top-ranked debate university. With my dusty box of Oratory and Policy Debate trophies in the attic, I was very curious to see what Mark would teach me about public speaking.

On the first day of the workshop, I felt something I hadn't felt in quite awhile—that first day of school feeling. Fairly quickly, each one of us had a turn up at the podium with a live microphone and video camera rolling. I was certain, of course, that my performance would be unblemished, and I'd earn myself a little gold star. But we didn't learn microphone technique in debate. Or need to be authentic, happy, and "in the moment." Or the proper way to introduce a First Dance at a wedding, which had been my assignment. Hmm...I might actually have to work at this MCing stuff.

As a woman, I'm somehow missing the "cheerleader gene." I was really struggling a lot with being peppier while I was up at the mic, in addition to my microphone technique (wow, bad habits are hard to break). On Day #2, I announced to the group in the morning that today I was going for over-the-top shiny happy (in case they needed barf bags). Mark had pounded into our brains that the workshop was the place to try new things—and

## Mark's Goals for the DJ Community

1. Annual earnings of \$75,000/year or \$2,500/wedding
2. DJs will invest more in themselves and attend more training, workshops, and conferences
3. More love!
4. Getting, understanding, and being what we're worth

maybe fail. Pride swallowed. Time to put Pharrell to shame.

Each time I got up to the mic on the second day, I put on my biggest smile and Mark would say, "Bigger...Even bigger...BIGGER!" I thought my face was going to break. But when I watched myself on the video tape later, I have to admit, I didn't look cheesy or inauthentic or uncool or any of the other things I'd feared. I looked like a really awesome wedding MC.

Four days after the workshop, I was the officiant, MC, and DJ for a high-energy couple that wanted a high-energy wedding. I couldn't wait to try out the new system I learned in Mark's workshop. I turned the "happy" up to eleven and conducted myself as a Mark-Ferrell-trained Master of Ceremonies (a grand entrance rehearsal with my assistant two hours before the wedding and high heels).

Before receiving the biggest tip of my career (\$250), this is the testimonial I got from one of the grooms: "Aside from every single person walking up to us and telling us how beautiful it was because of her...she's been everything." Hmm...do I think my \$1,000 investment, give or take, in Mark's workshop was worth it? Let me put it this way, I just raised my prices by \$300 (I'm almost up to \$2k!), and I have couples with a \$7,000 budget and a \$12,000 budget currently scrounging for deposit money.

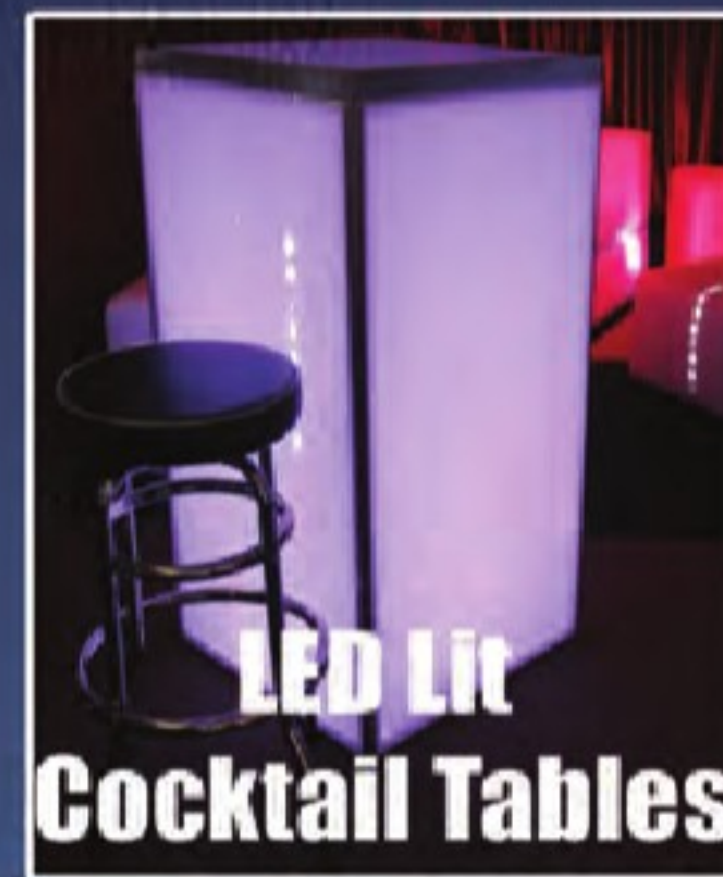
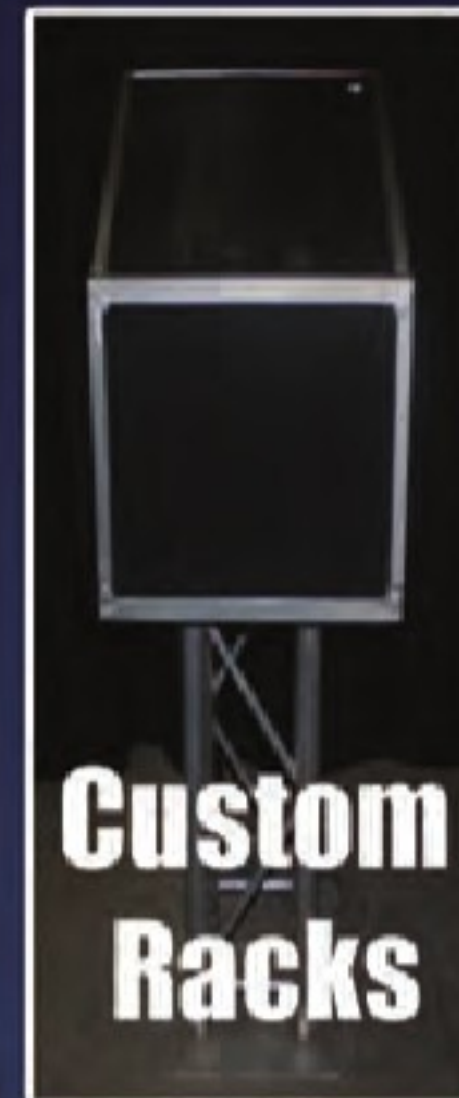
While my high school debate coach was one of the biggest positive influences on my life and career (thanks Coach Burton!), Mark Ferrell basically did for me in two days what Coach B. needed three years to do. In every way, Mark proved himself in to be the legend he truly is—and I can't wait for my next workshop. **MB**

## My Favorite "Mark-Isms" from the Workshop

1. "Nobody has called me for the Academy Awards...not sure why."
2. "Trying gives you hemorrhoids."
3. "I cry at weddings."
4. "Now go out and change people's lives."
5. "Cheese is as cheese does."



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# The Original Game-Changer

WHILE HELPING DJs REACH HIGHER, FERRELL ALSO HELPED MBLV RISE TO THE NEXT LEVEL

By Mike Buonaccorso

As part of the master redesign of the new Mobile Beat Las Vegas, which is essentially a two-year plan culminating in our “Silver Anniversary” 25th event in 2016, on our website we’ve featured a look back at the first 10 years of the Mobile Beat show.

On the MBLV website and Facebook fan page, I have been featuring a different year every week and in looking back, I’ve had some interesting memories myself. I thought compiling a list of the names of the speakers from those first 10 years would be a simple feat, as there are archive copies of all the program guides. But as amazing as it sounds today, in the years 1998 and 1999 there was such little emphasis on content that only the titles of the seminars appeared in the program guide; no description, no names of presenters!

It all changed in the year 2000. That year I vaguely remembered a guy who, in 1998, came up and introduced himself to me at the very end of the show that year at the Tropicana Hotel. He said his name was Mark Ferrell. Frazzled from four exhausting days, I had little interest in meeting new people. All I recalled was he was wearing a suit. And I was thinking, who wears a suit to a DJ show?

The following year that guy contacted me and said he had a seminar he’d like to present at the next Mobile Beat show. No, actually he had three seminars he wanted to present. I decided to take a chance. After all, that’s all it took back in those days. Fill the slots, sell the booths, there you go...a DJ show.

As I’ve said in my book *A Different Spin*, on February 22, 2000, at the very first seminar by this little-known SoCal DJ, I stood in the



Mobile Beat Las Vegas Producer Mike Buonaccorso co-founded the magazine in 1991 and established the Mobile Beat Show, which debuted at the Las Vegas Crowne Plaza, in January 1997. He has published the first and only specific history of the mobile DJ industry, *A Different Spin*, available at [www.adifferentspin.info](http://www.adifferentspin.info). He has spent the last few months redesigning the MBLV experience from the ground up for 2015, and is already looking ahead to 2016 and the 20th MBLV event.



back of the room watching the reaction of the crowd before, during and after the presentation. Ferrell’s message was simple yet profound to a generation of DJs who had never really taken themselves seriously. He put basic, common-sense principles in front of the DJs listening to him. At the heart of this revelation was the conclusion that, at that time, for a typical wedding, the DJ/entertainment budget was probably the lowest-priced aspect of the event. Ferrell directly tied this to the self-worth of the individual. Ferrell’s message was uplifting, positive, moral—and controversial.

I realized in that one brief session we had “graduated” to the next level. And as show producer I knew it would now be my responsibility to maintain that higher level at our events. I felt a greater accountability to present quality productions. The status quo was no longer going to be acceptable.

Since then, we have seen the emergence of many quality presenters who spend long hours developing content and the best ways to present that content to their audiences. We rarely use that dinosaur from the early days of DJ gatherings, the panel format.

I’ve gotten to know Mark Ferrell over the years and I proudly consider him a good friend. I have observed the extraordinary impact he has made on the industry. He brought a breath of fresh air to the DJ world in the year 2000, and I’m very excited to have him back as we re-invent and re-create the Mobile Beat show one more time in 2015. **MB**

## Mark Ferrell Timeline

1977 – DJ at Knott’s Berry Farm (Cloud Nine Disco)

1989 – Started mobile DJ business, specializing in weddings

1996 – Gave his first “Getting What Your Worth” speech to the Orange County chapter of the ADJA

2000 – MBLV keynote speaker

2001-2003 – Traveled to 40 cities in the U.S. and

Canada presenting the “Getting What Your Worth” message

2005 – Started conducting MarBecca Method workshops

2006 – DJed his last wedding; created Disc Jockey America podcast radio station

2012 – “Getting What Your Worth” and MarBecca Method workshops go international (UK and Canada then later Australia)

2015 – Mark returns to MBLV



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# A Pair of Hosts Not to Be Missed

BILL HERMANN AND JASON JONES BRING UNIQUE EXPERIENCE TO LAS VEGAS

By Mobile Beat Staff

**E**ntertainers who make it out to the next Mobile Beat Las Vegas event (Feb. 23-26, 2014 at the Riviera Hotel and Casino), will be partaking of an entirely new “Mobile Beat Experience.” A key element in the reinvention of the quintessential DJ conference / trade show, will be the event hosts, Bill Hermann and Jason Jones.

Actor/wedding entertainer Bill Hermann and producer/performer Jason Jones combined their formidable forces two years ago to create what became known as “The Entertainment Experience”—a combination of seminars designed to help mobile entertainers have the strongest impact and command the greatest prices, by applying lessons from the realms of acting, directing and producing to the act of creating the “entertainment experience” for clients.

The Entertainment Experience was born out of a one-hour seminar Bill created for a Disc Jockey News Conclave. The seminar covered how he used his knowledge and point of view as an actor in creating moving experiences at receptions. After much conversation, Bill and Jason teamed up to turn that seminar into what has become a three-day intensive.

Even though Bill has been an accomplished mobile DJ all his adult life, his first passion is theater. He has acted in many stage productions, commercials and films, while constantly honing his craft. His creative bent led him to combine his endeavors, applying his theater knowledge and skill to the DJ/MC arena.

“People started to really value what I brought them once I married theatre and receptions,” says Hermann.

We will find out more about The Entertainment Experience in December’s MBLV preview issue. Here we just want to get to know the hosts a little better...

Bill is the owner and sole performer at Bill Hermann Entertainment. A veteran of the entertainment industry, he has also had the good fortune to work on his craft as an improvisational comic, a singer, a character print model, a radio personality, a professional speaker, and now a teacher, coach and trainer. A DJ industry leader, who has been widely published and featured in the media, Bill was also the founding president of The Midwest Association of Professional Disc Jockeys.

Bill comes from a family of six and grew up in a small town in Michigan. He now is proud to live his life on a lake in the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities, with his wonderful wife Maureen, his beautiful daughters Ella and Lettie, a cat named Linus, a dog named Bob.

Jason Jones coaches performers and business owners from a range of industries. Using “transformational coaching,” he works with clients to remove obstacles and self-limitations resulting in clear a path to empowerment and a performance that produces results.

Jason has performed in the mobile DJ industry for over 20 years, produced stage shows, directed fashion shows, hosted talk shows on WCCO in Minneapolis and now online on DJNTV. He has trained with Kyle Cease and Louis Anderson and has hosted a number one rated radio morning show. He also produced and performed in Jason’s Comedy Night, a regionally touring comedy variety show that he now uses for experiential non-profit

fundraising. And he has shared some of his expertise in the ebook *Bar DJ Secrets*, which gives DJs the tools to bring more value to the bars where they serve and helps them negotiate higher fees.

He lives in Saint Paul, MN with his wife Kelly and son Maxfield.

In the next issue, we will take a closer look at just what it is that Bill and Jason will be bringing to Las Vegas in February—how their own Entertainment Experience will help create the all-new Mobile Beat Las Vegas Experience. **MB**



Bill Hermann

Jason Jones



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# Young DJ Is Focused on Weddings

DETROIT'S JON ULICNY IS AHEAD OF THE RECEPTION GAME

By Ryan Burger

**W**hen it comes to the DJ industry, back in 1986 when I started Djing, we had nothing. By the early 1990s there were magazines like DJ Times and Mobile Beat, but as of yet no Internet, as far as most people were concerned. By 1995, the Internet rocked, ProDJ.Com debuted, and the DJ conferences were going full steam and we had two ways to network with other Djs, both in person and virtually (kind of). Now we have Facebook, Twitter, and dozens of other ways DJs can network, find out about the latest trends in the industry, share ideas and more.

So, when I started my interview with a young DJ, John Ulicny of JRU Productions in Detroit, Michigan, I expected to find out that his DJ journey started with playing around with DJ gear and talking with Facebook friends about starting a company;

but what I found was a DJ who is all about the experience for his clients, whether it's a school gig or a wedding reception.

**Ryan Burger:** Jon tell us how you found your way into DJing:

**Jon Ulicny:** Well, I got into it—actually, my dad's friend was a DJ, and he started to get me into it. I've always been into music my entire life, so I've always had a love for music. And actually how I started getting into it was my brother played hockey and my dad coached. So I was always the one, they would say, hey, you want to play music like they do at the Red Wings games? Stop and play. So my dad always had me do that, and I started off, I just used a boom box and plugged it into the auxiliary jack and that's how I started doing hockey games.

And then a guy who coached with my dad, he was an actual mobile DJ, and he liked to do karaoke, so I started going and working under him, and he kind of showed me the ropes. And then in late 2009 he got a job transfer to China, so he



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quit DJing and he left all of his DJ equipment back home.

**R B:** So you had learned some of the skills but didn't have quite all the tools you wanted?

**J U:** I told my parents that I need some money to buy some equipment, would you be willing to invest in my idea? And at first my mom said, no way, absolutely not. I don't want him doing that, being involved with those types of crowds and people, and I think my dad felt exactly the opposite way, and he absolutely wanted me to do it. So he probably talked my mom into it somehow. Then we popped over to Guitar Center one day, and I think my first set up was, like, \$800. Then the next summer I paid them off, probably made double that, paid back the loan, and it just kind of took off from there.

**R B:** So what were your first gigs like?

**J U:** It started with graduation parties. People that my parents knew through hockey, my parents kind of said, "Oh, hey, my son DJs; he'll DJ your son or daughter's graduation party." And that's mainly the first summer I did all graduation parties. And



that was really—I think graduation parties were the start of my business. And then I started to know people, oh, we're having anniversary parties, oh, you meet people at these parties that are having weddings, and they want to do small-scale weddings, and then you do a few small-scale weddings, and then you start to do bigger and bigger weddings.

**R B:** You have a different attitude than most people in your generation and I'm glad to see it. You aren't just all about the mix and the music.

**J U:** I love mixing, and I like the modern music, but I like a whole mix of music, and I think that being a professional is more than just the Avicii and the dub step kind of stuff. I think it's providing an elegant way to do things, especially in a wedding.

And the amazing thing about this DJ, is that he's just now 18 years old. Thinking back to when I was 18, at that point, yes I was doing some decent business as a DJ, but it was nothing like what Jon has been able to develop since 2005 when he was the rink DJ for hockey. He is definitely on his way to even more success in the wedding reception arena. **MB**



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# Shani Barnett: Interactive Pro

CHICAGO DJ IS AN ENERGETIC AND DYNAMIC DJ LEADER

By Mobile Beat Staff



From dancer to MC to DJ to event producer, Chicago's Shani Barnett is the epitome of a well-rounded mobile entertainer. We were able to pin down this energetic performer for a brief discussion about her journey into DJing, the ongoing challenges for women in the industry, and her positive philosophy on DJs learning from each other.

**Mobile Beat:** Tell us a little bit about yourself.

**Shani Barnett:** Well, I'm in Chicago, and the name of the company I work with is Mobile Music Interactive Entertainment. We are multi-op, under one of our bigger names, Carey Smolensky Productions. I help run the Mobile Music part of the company.

We do every type of event under the sun, since we are a big production company: bar mitzvahs, weddings, school parties, sweet sixteens, birthday parties, backyard parties; and then we go up into the big corporate events, and not just their parties but producing entire conferences.

**M B:** What got you into this whole business and then what eventually hooked you up with Mobile Music Interactive Entertainment?

**S B:** I'm actually a dancer by trade. I'm a trained classical dancer and I've been dancing my entire life. And out here we have what are called motivational dancer/interactors. And somebody approached me and said, would you like to work for our DJ company and dance at parties? I was like, what do you mean, dance at parties? They said I'd basically get paid

to dance and get the crowd out on the floor.

I was like, yeah, of course; I would love to do that. Make money for it and dance and have fun? Yeah, let's do it. So I hooked up with a company that was actually out of New York. That's when the New York companies came to Chicago to bring the interactive entertainment to the Chicago area. I said, this is incredible—I get paid to have fun and celebrate people in unique ways.

And from there it grew, and I went from the dancer position into the co-MC position, learning what an MC does on a microphone. I actually did the reverse of a lot of people, and I went from dancer to MC to DJ last. Even though people always see me as a DJ, DJing is actually the last thing I learned in this industry...I like to tell people that I'm not just an MC or DJ or interactor—I'm an all-around entertainer.

**M B:** With your outgoing, bubbly personality, it's not surprising that you made that kind of progression. Were you born that way, or did it start coming out once you were "on stage?"

**S B:** Yeah. I mean, I guess I'm one of those people where I'm a performer, and when I'm on stage I just like to shine. But also on the flip side, because we do the corporate events and do the corporate conferences, I'm not one of those people where it has to be about me. I want to make sure they're smiling.

And when we do the weddings and the bar mitzvahs and those type of events, as much as I'm in the spotlight and I'm on the microphone or I'm DJing and I'm rocking the crowd, I kind of also put myself in the background and let the party take over...

I can take all those roles and what I love about it is just knowing that the end result is that the clients are happy and



they become returning clients...

**M B:** When it comes down to it, what is your favorite type of event to do, of all the ones that you do on a regular basis?

**S B:** Wow. That's a very hard question...I really do love doing the mitzvahs, just for the simple fact is it's a celebration of a boy or girl who becomes an adult...It's a huge thing in the Jewish religion, and all their friends and family are there to celebrate this great event. So everybody's just there and you feel the love in the room and they're ready to party, and it's just a great feeling that you have 200 people out there partying.

Now, people are going to say, how is that different from a wedding? Well, for me I love the mitzvahs because it's non-stop energy from the time you walk in the door; whereas at a wedding you have the cocktail time and you have the dinner time and people doing speeches.

So as much as you are working, at a wedding reception, you're not really out there on a microphone or a dance floor after you do the introductions until it's really time to dance; whereas at the mitzvah, from the time they walk in, whether it's a four-hour event or five-hour event, you're rocking the dance floor from the minute they walk in to the minute that party's over.

So I love just always being active. I just love always being active and making people smile.

**M B:** Changing focus, what kind of hurdles have you experienced in this business because of it being so male-dominated?

**S B:** Sure. It definitely is a problem. I hear it from a lot of other female DJs that contact me in social media and emails, asking me how I'm this successful as a female DJ.

And first and foremost what I try to explain to them is when I am on the job, when I'm here at the office, I am a DJ/entertainer first; I'm a female second. So to run with the big boys, I want everybody to know it's not men versus women.

Yes, we get all the clients to come in here and they turn around and say, I want a male DJ; I want a male MC. And that's when I turn around or one of the salespeople in the office turns around and says, can I ask you why you want the male over the female? Sometimes they don't even have an answer for you. Most of the times they feel that females can't command the crowd and they can't get people rocking on the dance floor, just because they're old school and they really don't know that there are females out there all over the world that sometimes could even be better than half the guys that are out there.

So it's just educating them that it's not a female-male thing; that it's more being an entertainer. There are guys out there that if I put two guys next to each other, one might

not be as great as the other one, and they're guys. So I just try to explain to them that it has nothing to do with male or female, black or white or any of that.

It just has to do with what type of entertainer do you want. Do you want somebody that's going to be soft-spoken? Do you want somebody that's going to be more of a low key? Or do you want outgoing, crazy type of entertainers? If that's the case, there's other people in our company that might fill that bill that might be a male or female. So I kind of try to get the conversation as quickly as possible off the male-female thing into what type of entertainer do you want on your event.

**M B:** Do you have other female DJs on staff?

**S B:** Actually I am the only female DJ on staff. We do have other MCs that are female here in the company. We're in the process of training two other females for our DJs.

And for us it's a huge training process, because all our DJs learn how to mix, how to blend the music. They're not slamming songs. They all have to have their own legal music libraries. So there's a lot of steps that go into making sure our MCs and DJs are at that professional level before we even put them out in the crowd.

So right now we don't have any other female DJs in our company but we do have female MCs. So if somebody even turned around and said they wanted an all-female crew, we can put a whole entire female crew out there for them if that's something that they wanted.

**M B:** When we've had female salespeople for our own local company, there's an extra connection you can definitely get with the bride, and it's to your advantage, no doubt about it.

**S B:** It's a comfort level. For the wedding industry it's a lot





easier for us because it is that comfort level with the females when they're talking to the brides and understanding why they're so stressed out and why they're yelling at their fiancés.

For a lot of our other type of events it is harder for me; and I'll be honest, it's especially in the corporate world. It's very hard for our corporate clients, especially the ones that are on the East Coast and West Coast for our company to turn around and say, Shani's going to be your event producer.

And they say, wait, she's going to be our event producer? Yes. Shani's going to be your event producer. She's going to be the one that's flying out that'll be running your three-day conference. And they turn around and go, well, is she up to it? We have to explain to them she's more than up to it; she's probably one of the best salespeople we have here in our office. And not only does she know how to run the whole event, but if something happens with the PowerPoint or something happens with the lights or something happens with the tech table, she can run rings around the union techs if she has to.

And again, we just have to explain that, again, don't look at her as a female; look at her as she's the event producer that's going to be on point for you and run your whole entire event.

**M B:** Speaking of the technical side of things, what kind of gear are you using?

**S B:** Well, I love my CDs and I love my mixer. But I've also fallen in love with the new Pioneer SB controller. I was one of the first people actually at the last Mobile Beat show to be able to do a set on the controller. So as we are speaking I can officially say now that I have one in my hands, that I will be taking out on my gigs now that it's official.

But I run CDs and a Rane mixer when I do all my mobile events...So whenever I run in the clubs I'm bringing my backpack of my laptop and my Serato box plugging into whatever they have there for me.

But I can work off of any equipment that people have for me. I'm the type of DJ that wants to be able to walk into any type of situation, whether it's my own or helping somebody out or doing anything anywhere in the world, where I say, okay, what do you have there? Great. Okay. Give me five minutes and let's run this and have a great night.

I want to make sure I'm well-rounded no matter what I'm doing, so I could jump on any type of gear possible...Our company supplies all the other parts of the sound system, but every single one of our DJs brings their own top case to spin on.

**M B:** How about microphones? Are you usually sporting a headset?

**S B:** You know what? I'm not fond of the headset, even being an interactive entertainer, because I like people to sing with me—well, I shouldn't say "with me" because I'm not a singer—but I like them to sing on the microphone when we have those feel-good songs. So I definitely use a wireless handheld microphone, while we use different types of microphones depending on our events.

For most of our mobile DJ events we're using Shure microphones, and of course for our corporate conferences, for our speakers we're using various lavaliers and headsets, and we're mainly using Sennheiser microphones for our corporate events.

**M B:** What else do you want DJs to know about you, or do you want to share with them about DJing?

**S B:** My whole thing is you can always learn every day of the week, no matter how old you are, no matter how long you've been in this industry. There's always somebody to learn from.

I learned that at an early age when I was dancing, that no matter what, there's always room to grow. And that's why I go to the conventions like Mobile Beat. There's always somebody, something that I can take away or somebody that I can talk to that I can—you know, oh, that's a great idea, let me bring that back, let me do that.

So I always feel that especially at the conventions, talk to as many people as you can, get to know who they are. You might think that this person, oh, I would never want to talk to them

because they don't do what I do. But they might have a really incredible idea that you can incorporate in something that you do.

And I love helping people out, so that's why a lot of times I do seminars at some of the conventions, or I like I've done at the opening party at Mobile Beat, where I just went on stage and showed people that it's okay to get out there and interact. You know, we're not just DJs. Get the crowd going; put smiles on their faces. Look at somebody and look at them in the eyes and smile at them because that's going to have that warm feeling of wanting to get on the dance floor.

So I'm always willing to talk to anybody—and I'm willing to talk to everybody to just bring a new tidbit back to my company and rock my events.



Find out more about Shani at [www.MobileMusicOnline.com](http://www.MobileMusicOnline.com). **MB**



# Meet Stacy Zemon...

...AUTHOR, ENTREPRENEUR AND TRUE "COMPLETE DISC JOCKEY"

By Stu Chisholm

**W**hen writing "The Complete Disc Jockey," my main goals were to show the many areas where a DJ might find skillset-related work beyond the mobile world, maximize their income within it, and find new ways to excel even in the face of a weak economy. Over the years, I've always been on the lookout for fellow entertainers who exemplify these ideas, and, a few years back, I encountered a living, breathing example of a true DJ success story and complete disc jockey, Stacy Zemon.



Mobile Beat readers may recognize her name from her best-selling book, *The Mobile DJ Handbook*, considered by some to be the "bible of the industry," read by forty-thousand DJs globally, and Stacy's seminars at industry conferences and events. Her most recent title, *The Mobile DJ Entrepreneur*, along with *The DJ Sales & Marketing Handbook* and *The Mobile DJ MBA* (also in Spanish as *La Maestría del DJ Móvil*) have ensured her spot as the world's most prolific DJ book author.

Stacy is also the Publisher and Chief Scribe of the website ProMobileDJ.com (featuring a monthly column by yours truly), and if that wasn't enough, Stacy also oversees her ProDJTV.com virtual online classroom. My *Mobile Beat* colleague, Mike Buonaccorso, calls her "One of the most successful women in the DJ profession." Zemon's collective body of work has arguably spawned more professional DJ business owners than anyone else in the world. Anyone following in her footsteps will need a good supply of energy drinks!

Since 1979, Stacy has reached an audience of millions as a radio, club, karaoke and mobile DJ. Her roots are in radio, where she's been an announcer, music director and program director. Even when there have been setbacks, Zemon's creative business wizardry has helped her spin an impressively successful career. I caught up with Stacy between her travels from a DJ convention to an out-of-state performance.

**Stu Chisholm:** So when did you get bit by the DJ bug?

**Stacy Zemon:** Back when I was 12 or 13, I listened to a lot of AM radio and was a huge Top 40 fan. This one station did remote broadcasts and I'd get my mom to drive me to the mall and I would constantly watch and ask questions of the DJs to show me how they worked, what all the gear did and so on. This was in the early '70s and the guys at the station were very encouraging. They gave me some commercial copy, which I took home and used to create "WSJZ"—my initials—and I interviewed friends and recorded commercials on my reel-to-reel tape recorder. I knew I wanted to work in radio!

**SC:** Did all of this lead anywhere?

**SZ:** Oh, yes! Those tapes helped me to get in at the closed-circuit radio station at my high school. When I got to college, because I had that experience, I got into the 50,000-watt college station as a freshman, which was unheard of at the time. I also got two part-time gigs at local commercial stations doing on-air announcing at one and news on the other. So I used my real name and, for the first time, my made-up broadcast name, Terri London. At about that time, I also got my first nightclub job at a place called T's Disco. We played stuff like "You And I" by Rick James along side "Ring My Bell" by Anita Ward and "Hot Blooded" by Foreigner.

**SC:** So when did the mobile work come in?

**SZ:** Well, I should probably back up the bus and mention that I took a job when I was 16 at a resort in the Poconos as the assistant social director. There I gained excellent experience running games and giving dance lessons poolside to resort vacationers.

**SC:** How very Dirty Dancing of you!

**SZ:** [Laughs] Yeah, just a bit. After college I worked for two different multi-ops, one in New Jersey and one in Connecticut, and I also continued to work in radio. Then, in 1996, I hit a point where I was tired of making less money than my male counterparts in radio, and getting the lesser, lower-paying mobile gigs. Women just didn't seem to get any respect in this business. I wanted to strike out on my own and wondered if anyone had ever written a book on being a mobile DJ.

**SC:** This sounds SO familiar!

**SZ:** This was before the Internet, so I headed to my local library to do some research. I found that there were really only a few books on the topic...

**SC:** Spinnin' 2000? [by Bob Linquist, Mobile Beat cofounder]

**SZ:** Yes! It was actually the first Spinnin' book. I felt the information could be updated and added to, so I started to work on what became *The Mobile DJ Handbook*. I had the idea to put interviews at the end: "Records of Success: Interviews with America's Top DJs." Not knowing how to contact any of them, or even who they all might be, I contacted another DJ magazine, and got a great list! I conducted ten interviews over the phone, and found out about DJ shows and conventions, which I didn't know existed.



# INSIDE THE INDUSTRY

I learned so much from these DJs and doing shows in the process that I said to myself, "Self, now that you've collected the wisdom of the brightest and best DJs on the planet, why not start a DJ company using that wisdom as a starting point?" Not only did I do just that, but I brought my broadcast experience along with me.

**SC:** In what way?

**SZ:** I partnered with a major broadcasting company and started a mobile DJ division for seven different radio stations of various formats. At one time I had 23 DJs working for me, and we also offered lighting, photography, balloons and everything someone would need for a wedding or party. My goal was to be a "one-stop shop," and we capitalized on the "celebrities" of the radio stations. It was a huge success. The business was the dominant force in New England, serving Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York City.



**SC:** That sounds a lot like Rick Hansen's "Radio Parties." Is this a case of great minds running on the same track?

**SZ:** Yes. I met Rick several years later and found out that he did things a little differently than I did, but our goals were very similar. He recently interviewed me for his podcast (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gHLITviVNus>) and we've become pretty good friends.

**SC:** What came next?

**SZ:** That "dream come true" lasted less than two years because the broadcasting company changed hands and the new owners wanted nothing to do with a mobile division. To be honest, it was the most devastating thing I'd ever experienced.

**SC:** So what did you do to pick up the pieces?

**SZ:** It took a while. I decided not to be a multi-op and focus on my own company, being more selective of the events I'd work. I wrote more books and shifted my focus toward improving the mobile industry and helping my fellow DJs. After all, I'd collected all of this great information from DJs all over the world! To this day, the most gratifying moments are when a DJ e-mails or calls me, or comes up to me at a convention and says, "You made a big difference in my life and business!" A colleague recently called me a "serial entrepreneur"—equal parts creativity and business—and I'd say that's pretty accurate although I'd also add the word "heart" to the mix.

**SC:** ProMobileDJ.com reflects that shift in focus. When did that happen?

**SZ:** That was 2010. I think I'm the only female in the world to launch an educational website for mobile DJs! It's a free resource that gives DJs the tools they need to manage and grow their entertainment companies. Articles and videos come from myself and my team of industry experts.

**SC:** And I'm happy to be one of them! And now there's an online mall?

**SZ:** Yes, VirtualDJmall.com is yet another one of my ventures! The idea was to have a place where DJs could find a wide range of items for professional and personal use, all in one easy-to-shop location.

**SC:** So what comes next?

**SZ:** Technology will keep changing and the barriers to entering our profession will keep getting lower and lower, so it's extremely important that professional DJs focus on their performances, business practices and exceptional customer service. Through my books, seminars, and with Pro Mobile DJ and Pro DJTV, I continue to try to help folks in our industry improve in these areas.

**SC:** Any advice for Mobile Beat readers?

**SZ:** To be successful in our industry, it takes talent, knowledge and skills. This applies not only to performing, but also to running a business. Practice, experience, and continued learning are the essential keys to constant improvement. Single-ops who's reputation allows them to charge a premium fee or multi-ops that offer popular up-sells can make a six figure annual income and more. Believe in yourself and never stop bettering your best!

## ABOUT PRO DJTV AND BEYOND:

When it comes to DJ videos, finding something truly useful or applicable to your needs can be a chore. It's tedious slogging through the tens of thousands of videos posted, often by dubious "authorities," on YouTube. So much junk, so little time! What to do?



Stacy Zemon took this question in her usual stride: Jump right in and not only make it happen, but do it right.

"I was having [this] conversation via Skype with Jose Heredia from American DJ," says Zemon, "and he actually gave me the idea!"

Heredia told her that he couldn't take on such a project and that was all she needed to run with the concept. Now, DJs from all parts of the entertainment universe can find all of the best original tutorial DJ videos in one place, searchable by topic, from real pros, 24/7 on their mobile device, computer or television.

As an on-camera host for Disc Jockey News Network, Zemon has also provided event coverage at DJ conventions. More than covering them, Zemon has been a keynote and featured speaker at the Mid-America DJ Convention, the Mobile Beat Show & Conference, and the International DJ Expo, where she is also a judge at annual "DJ of the Year" competitions.

Lastly, Zemon is a success coach to DJ business owners, also having assisted Denon DJ and Beamz DJ Interactive Music System with their business goals. And, to boot, she is an accredited Life Coach. Zemon is an Endorsed Artist of American DJ Lighting and Promo Only Music & Video.

For autographed copies of her books, visit [www.ProMobileDJ.com](http://www.ProMobileDJ.com). To learn about Stacy's business success coaching services, visit [www.StacyZemon.com](http://www.StacyZemon.com). To find out about her life coaching services, visit [www.LifeCoachStacyZemon.com](http://www.LifeCoachStacyZemon.com). Stacy Zemon can be contacted at [Stacy@ProMobileDJ.com](mailto:Stacy@ProMobileDJ.com) or 877-442-7170. **MB**



# 20 Years of Wedding DJ Biz Wisdom

**TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR WEDDING DJ BUSINESS**

By Ryan Burger

**A**lthough I've been a wedding DJ professional for 20 years, having done over 1000 weddings, I still look for learning opportunities.

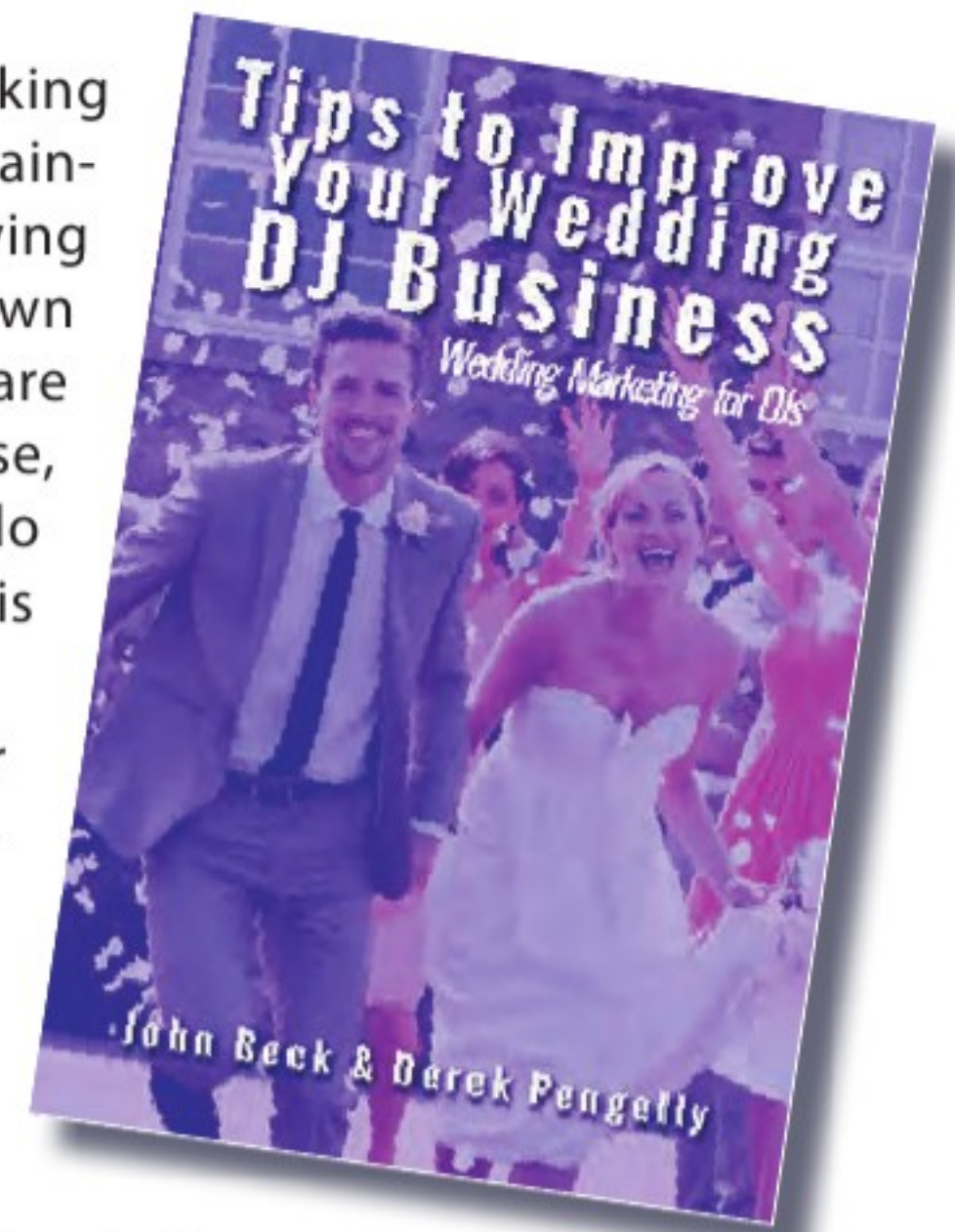
So, I casually read *Tips to Improve Your Wedding DJ Business: Wedding Marketing for DJs* by John Beck & Derek Pengelly (previously published as *Running a Successful Wedding DJ Business*) over a weekend recently. Well, this old dog has learned some new tricks!

Author John Beck is an experienced Australian wedding professional who has learned from many of the same sources I have over the last 10-plus years, being a regular attendee of the Mobile Beat Las Vegas events, reading *Mobile Beat* and hanging out with many of the same DJ educators that I've learned from, including Mark Ferrell, Randy Bartlett, Peter Merry and many more. His co-author Derek Pengelly also chimes in nicely in portions of the book to provide a UK perspective on DJing as well. Derek also clearly draws from similar sources.

Beck does a fantastic job at taking the concepts by these great entertainers (and many more), and while paying them homage, also adding his own take on all of the basic ideas that are presented. The Mark Ferrell's phrase, "It's not what you do, it's how you do it," is a strong theme throughout this book.

Beck and Pengelly cover everything from marketing to performance. On the business side they discuss some great comparisons to other types of purchases, places to advertise, ideas on pricing pricing and much more. On the performance side, they deal with doing wedding ceremonies as well as key reception elements like grand entrances, bouquet tosses and wrapping up the night.

Overall, as a seasoned wedding pro or a DJ who is looking into getting into the wedding market, I recommend the investment in *Tips to Improve Your Wedding DJ Business*. Currently available through Amazon both in Kindle and physical form, the book will soon be available for a discount (for a limited time) in the Mobile Beat Bookstore at [MobileBeat.Com](http://MobileBeat.Com). **For more on author John Beck check out: [www.weddingdjspecialist.com.au/about-john-beck.html](http://www.weddingdjspecialist.com.au/about-john-beck.html). MB**





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# Mike Doucot Turns EV Toward DJs

**MAKING PRODUCTS WITH MOBILE ENTERTAINERS IN MIND**

By Mobile Beat Staff



In the mid-1990s, Michael Doucot started DJing for Party Music, in Eden Prairie, MN, where he moved into being a full-time employee and oversaw 20 systems. "I did the scheduling and all that stuff," he remembers. "So I had to put up with whoever was calling in because their girlfriend said they can't work that night."

Mike continues, "I worked with them to try to find some ways to save some money and grow their business. We actually took a unique approach in allowing the jocks to show up to the gigs without the gear. We would actually book enough shows where they had their own setup crew that would have a huge truck. And they'd load it up with 20 systems."

Mike's journey took him through Brown Institute and a stint in radio on KCLD in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Eventually his story collides with Electro-Voice.

"During that time I had met my wife, and we moved back to the Twin Cities. And I found a position in customer service here, which at the time was Telex. [In 2004] I started out in customer service and eventually worked my way into the sales group. And for the last four or five years was the regional sales manager for the upper Midwest here for Electro-Voice."

In June 2006, EV and its Telex parent company became part of Bosch, with over a quarter million employees.

"The beauty of Bosch is that they are the second largest privately held company in the world. So they don't have quarterly fire sales to try to appease the investors and things like that," Mike explains. "So their vision is very long term, but they invest so much of their profits right back in the business because it's not being paid out to shareholders...It goes right back into the business. So research and development and things like that are always improved on. As a whole, Bosch files something in the neighborhood of 17 patents for every working hour of the day, globally, which is just mind-boggling."

So, how does Mike's DJ street cred effect his work? "When I started here it was amazing to me to understand how the focus

**E**lectro-Voice (EV) started back in 1930 when Lou Burroughs and Al Kahn incorporated their business servicing radio receivers in South Bend Indiana. A couple of decades later, in the 1950s, they began developing loudspeakers to add to their line of microphones.

Known originally for their microphones, EV's business is now more driven by loudspeakers, ranging from compact commercial speakers, through the portable PA lines that DJs know, through touring line arrays and beyond. Their microphones are still industry standards in both wired and wireless categories.

## The Sound of Silence at EV

While touring the Electro-Voice offices and having the interview with Michael Doucot in Burnsville, Minnesota we were treated to something we had never seen anywhere else before, an anechoic chamber. This is the ultimate way to test the true sound that a speaker puts out, with everything else pulled out of the equation.

"When using a loudspeaker, what a person hears is not just the loudspeaker, but also reflections, standing waves, and other effects that are caused by the speaker's interaction with the room," explains Nick Sulzer, Electro-Voice Engineering. "In order to determine the performance of loudspeakers without any influence, Electro-Voice designs and tests in an anechoic chamber, in addition to real-world environments. Anechoic means 'without echo,' and anechoic chambers are reference environments that do not have any reflective surfaces. Within the anechoic chamber, Electro-Voice uses a proprietary measurement system that allows us to capture a full 360° sphere around the speaker."





of the industry at the time was so much on musicians and bands and musical instruments of that nature, not really considering the DJ as a primary target. So naturally when I walked in the door, I immediately saw this reflected in any of the websites or brochures or even the product creation. Nobody was really paying attention to these sorts of things. So I really pushed for a focus on that. And we tell the story that I've been able to shift that focus now in my new role, being able to really focus on the direction. And at least putting more of an emphasis on the market, on the mobile DJ market."

EV also went to work at condensing the technologies from their high level tour sound into mobile speakers like their ETX series. Aspects like the user interface have been developed with an eye toward how DJs and others will be using the gear on a day to day basis.

"Our real focus on the DJ has really helped quite a bit," says Mike. "Because when you think about it, a musician is very passionate about their instrument. A guitar guy, he knows everything about his guitar. He knows what strings, he knows the

wood, he knows where the pickups are, and he knows everything about that thing. Where for a DJ, their instrument in some respects would be their controller, laptop or or something like that; but their sound really comes from their loudspeakers. And their tone, their forward face to their customer is going to be the loudspeakers. And by that, they have a variety of different needs. It's not just a one-size-fits-all system that they need for every event. They need something for a ceremony system. They need something

for outdoors. They need something for a small gathering. They need something for a high school prom. So there's a really variety of needs. You have to bring the right tools. So where a guitarist may spend his money on multiple guitars, DJs are spending their money on multiple loudspeaker systems."

In the most recent years Mike has worked with industry players. "Just in the upper Midwest where I am, there's a tremendous number of DJs that I have so much respect for, that are doing things that I never even thought of when I was DJing. Jason Yoshino would be an example of it. Bill Herman, Jason Jones, the list goes on and on of guys that I know and have seen that just do business the right way. And they're so interested in their client's experience, that it really blows my mind. It's so much more than just music."

In his roll as the Marketing Manager for Portable Sound at Electro-Voice, Mike continues to work with DJs, retailers and others at making the strongest products possible for the DJ market. He can be found at many industry conferences and serves as the point man for DJs. He told us to publish his email address ([michael.doucot@us.bosch.com](mailto:michael.doucot@us.bosch.com)), as he welcomes conversations with DJs about EV, or the industry in general. **MB**



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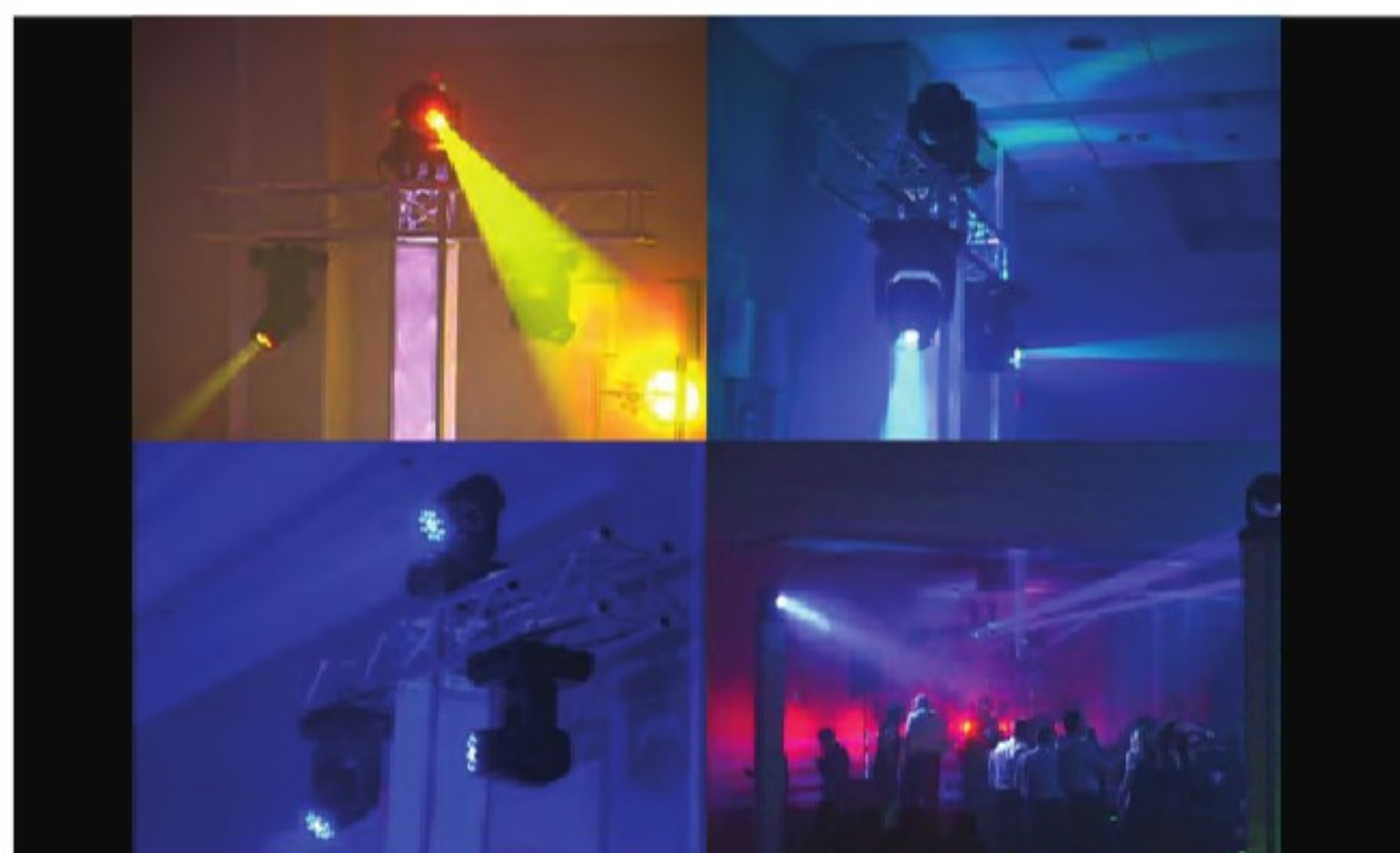
## When Worlds Collide (In a Good Way)

THE LUMIN LIGHTS HYBRID GOBO SPOT 150

By Brad Dunsbergen

Recently I had the opportunity to check out the Hybrid Gobo Spot 150 from New York-based Lumin Lights. It is a spot and wash LED moving head fixture. This moving head is really nice because it combines the best of both worlds: It has both gobos for spot and is a very bright wash light.

This all made possible by the 1-piece white 150W LED and, for the wash, 8-piece 9W Tri LEDs. The unit features 5 operation modes: sound control, stand-alone, master and slave, built-in program and DMX 512. There are a total of 7 fixed gobos plus open and 7 rotating gobos plus open. The rotating gobo speed



is variable and has shake. The prism is a rotating 3-facet prism with adjustable speed and direction. The color wheel hosts 7 plus white, with color scroll at variable speeds.

I had the Hybrid Gobo Spot 150 out for a youth dance and a play. It was used in sound-active mode for the dance and behaved just as expected. It changed colors, and panned and scanned, strobed and changed gobos. For the play it was used as a follow spot using a DMX board, this where the Hybrid Gobo Spot 150 really shined, so to speak.

The light output from the 150 watt LED is nothing less than spectacular. I had a few of the actors complain about how bright the light was. Although the build quality of the Hybrid Gobo Spot 150 is excellent, this is not to say that it can be thrown in back of your van and allowed to roll around. But if it is properly cased the Hybrid Gobo Spot 150 should be able to stand years of use. **MB**

[www.luminlights.com](http://www.luminlights.com)





# Martin Is Back...

...IN THE DJ GROOVE, THAT IS, WITH THE RUSH SERIES

By Marc Andrews

**M**artin Lighting, now under the flag of the Harman Group (JBL, AKG, Soundcraft, Allen & Heath, etc.) has returned to the DJ arena with a new line of lighting fixtures in the RUSH product line. They have started out with some high-end yoke-head lights, an effect light called the MultiBeam2, and two PAR offerings.

Overall the construction is rock solid, as one would expect from Martin. All of the fixtures we looked at feature Neutrik Powercon electrical hookups and pass-throughs making it easier to wire them up. All of the lights except the two PAR cans (Par 1 RGBW and Par RGBW Zoom) have both 3 pin and 5 pin DMX.

## MH1 PROFILE

The RUSH MH1 Profile is a massive unit that is really built to bridge the gap between higher end lighting and the DJ market. With a street price of \$1,995, it's on the higher end of the scale of what DJs are looking for. With no detailed built-in programs, and basic sound activation, it's clear that this light is aimed at those

who are comfortable with programming: it covers a total of 17 DMX channels to control its gobos and color wheels.

Martin's second piece in the MH portion of the RUSH line is a smaller LED wash light / moving head that for mobile DJs will work better in pairs or in sets of 4, and is priced more affordably at just over \$1,000 per head. Using it at several school-related events, it sent a strong path of light panning through the room and complimented the

MultiBeam 2 described below.

The RUSH MH3 and MH4 are very similar lights with variations in size and specs. The MH4 features an Osram 2R lamp and a 6-way prism, while the MH3 has a Platinum 5R and a 8-way prism. The big brother MH3 is \$2,495 and it's not-so-little brother streets for \$1,895.

## MULTIBEAM 2 AND PARS

When I first saw this series of lighting the model that attracted my attention the most was the Multibeam 2. This light needs to be seen to be understood. It features two moving bars with five individual, controllable 10W RGBW LEDs on each. The basic effect is similar to an old-school scanner or even a helicopter light. The five beams on each arm can be individually addressed, controlled and colored. Priced at around \$995, the Multibeam 2 provides an interesting update on a cool retro effect.

The two PARs are a basic Par 1 RGBW, which is powered by

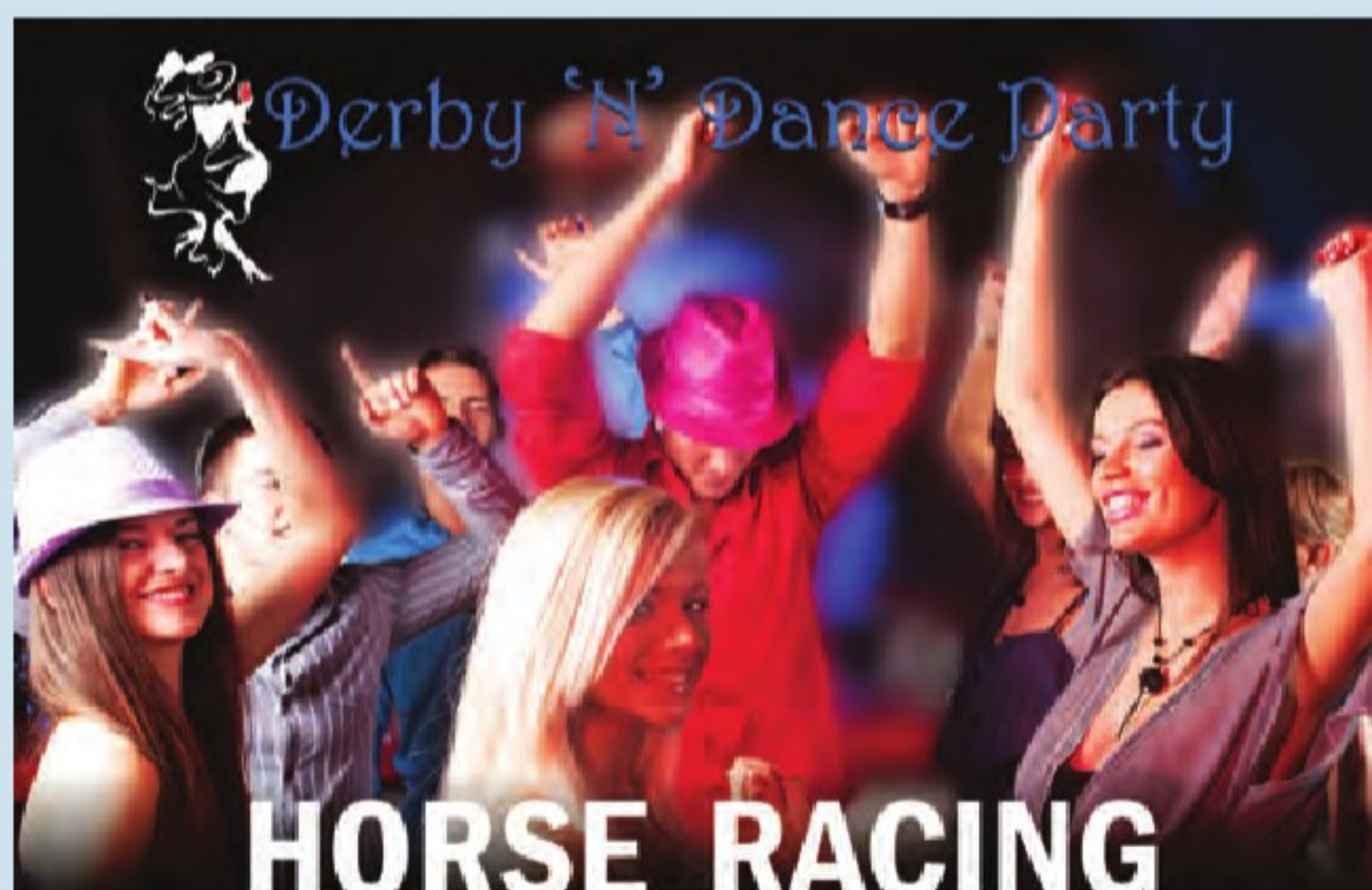
seven 10W RGBW Cree LEDs, and the Par 2 RGBW Zoom, which is equipped with 12 10W RGBW LEDs offering zooming capability. They both use premixed color programs where you can hit 33 color presets plus a full white, so tuning in that exact color the bride wants might be a challenge, but their overall functionality is fantastic.

## WHAT ELSE IS ON THE WAY?

Coming soon to the line is Martin's new version of the Wizard, a classic effect light that will get the LED update treatment; a new strobe system; and another large-format MH series head called the MH5 Profile. Martin is, without a doubt, refocusing on the DJ market with a growing line of mobile, budget-friendly, but high-quality lighting that is worth a serious look for DJs who are serious about providing a great light show. **MB**



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# Peavey's Escort 5000: Why Would a DJ Want One?

WELL, LET ME TELL YOU...

By Robert A. Lindquist

**S**imple is good; and the Peavey Escort 5000 offers a really simple solution when you need a capable small PA that can go just about anywhere and get the job done. With multiple mic/line inputs and an impressive set of features, it covers all the main bases for solo performers, duets or trios that play intimate sized venues. It's also handy for school and corporate events and for house-of-worship applications. But why would a DJ want one?

If you make a good chunk of your change playing weddings, then you have witnessed first-hand the monumental shift in how and where couples tie the knot. The trend today is for couples to plan their ceremony and reception around the venue. Rather than a church wedding followed by a reception elsewhere, it's now more common for the ceremony to take place on the manicured lawn of a resort, on a deck overlooking a golf course, in the lush garden of a historic mansion, at a state park with a waterfall as the backdrop, or even on the new mown hay field next to a century old renovated dairy barn. The reception can then be right at the same location in a tent or permanent structure.

Along with the natural beauty this brings to the couple's wedding album, it also eliminates the down time between the ceremony and reception turning it into one continuous event. For those of us who specialize in weddings, this typically means a nice up charge for providing a second sound system for the wedding ceremony. As the ceremony may be in a location on the grounds, a single, self-contained audio amplification tool that travels light, sounds good, and can provide immediate solutions to unexpected



requests, would be perfect.

The Peavey Escort 5000 is just such a device. The powered, fan-cooled mixer has seven mic/line (combo XLR-1/4") inputs PLUS a dedicated media input that will play direct from a flash drive. It also accepts RCA and 3.5mm (mini) TRS connectors so you should never run short of places to plug things into. Phantom power, a seven-band EQ, digital effects and a Feedback Locating System also come standard. Peavey says the power output is 250 watts per side.

On the backside, there are two 1/4" outputs that drive the two included speakers, along with an unpowered monitor and unpowered subwoofer output. Cables and stands are also part of the package and it all clamps securely together to form a 50-pound molded plastic pod with wheels.

The two-way speakers sport 10" woofers and (conditions permitting) are adequate for an average-sized (under 150) outdoor wedding. If you need to cover a greater area, I would suggest you forgo the included speakers and feed a couple of larger powered loudspeakers using the monitor outputs. If the situation merits, you could also add more bottom using that subwoofer out.

Focusing on the mixer section, with seven inputs, there's little it can't do. For the quickee "I do...I do...and I now pronounce you..." ceremony, just connect an officiant mic to one of the combo XLR-1/4" jacks and a digital device to the media channel using either a TRS mini-to-RCA, or TRS mini-to-TRS mini cable. If additional music sources are needed, you can add them by adapting to a 1/4" and connecting to one of the main channels. You could also use the built-in flash drive to source the music, but your ability to mix or cross-fade will be greatly reduced. While it's simply a "select and play" option, it can be super handy in a pinch or as a backup when a bride hands you a flash drive at the last minute and says, "Here's our processional and recessional." As we all know, that does happen.

For the bigger productions with readers, soloists, strings, etc., the Escort 5000 really shows its muscle. You can easily accommodate an officiant mic and a reader's mic and still have five inputs left for whatever you need in terms of additional reader mics or inputs for instruments or vocalists. Add a little reverb using the digital effects and your sure to get a few compliments on how well it sounds.

We used the Escort 5000 for several wedding ceremonies over



*After a 20-year broadcast radio career, Robert Lindquist built a successful mobile DJ business, and by the late '80s he had also written his first book, Spinnin', a DJ how-to. In 1990, he became the founding publisher of Mobile Beat. With the Live2Play Network ([www.L2pnet.com](http://www.L2pnet.com)), aimed at the live sound realm, he has pioneered online publishing. Along with being a broadcaster, publisher and Internet pioneer, he's also a sax player, writer, gear reviewer and one of the regulars behind the board at his local church.*



## Dealing with Those Straps

Peavey has gone the extra mile in designing the Escort 5000 by including speaker stands and a place to store them. Unfortunately, the stands really aren't very practical and the straps designed to secure them in the case interfere with basic operations such as connecting the power chord.

**Remedy #1:** (as shown here) simply remove the two screws securing the straps and reverse them.

**Before:** Plastic buckle is interferes with power connector.



**After:** Simply remove two screws and place the strap so it goes the other way.



**Or... Remedy #2:** Just remove the straps all together, leave the stands home and use that space to store proper speaker cables.

the summer without any major issues. It sets up easily on a table, a keyboard stand, or even a \$16 tray stand (as pictured). We simply wrapped a bungee cord around it as a safety precaution. An iPad was mounted to the front using an iKlip Xpand from IK Multimedia. As no two ceremony set-ups are the same, the Escort offered the flexibility we needed to adapt to the circumstances. The mixer's various EQ options allowed us to get a strong, clean sound without the squeal of feedback.

Some minor annoyances: The stands included with the system are, and I'm being kind, pretty useless. Unless you are working indoors on a stage, they are too short. They are also difficult to unfold and won't stay extended if the little pins fall out (which they do). The speaker sockets do not fit tightly to the stands but allow the speakers to rotate freely. We did one event outdoors next to a lake and when the breeze picked up, one of the speakers started spinning around like a pinwheel, nearly snapping the cable. My suggestion would be to just leave the included stands home and use standard stands—sockets are provided for both the included ones and standard ones. The included speaker cables will get you by, but I would also recommend substituting heavy duty 1/4" to 1/4" speaker cables, just to be safe.

And that strap that holds the stands in place inside the case? On one side, the plastic buckle is in the way when you go to connect the power cord. On the other side, the buckle is in the way when you try to connect a 1/4" plug to the monitor output jacks. If you don't need it, grab a Philips head and remove it. If you do decide to keep the strap, you can make it much easier to live with simply by removing the two screws and reversing it (as shown in the side bar).

I also found the wheels to be rather inadequate. On any uneven or unpaved surface, you'll probably want to just carry the unit or hand truck it (it's much lighter without the stands). While it rolls better on smooth surfaces, it can still be very unbalanced and difficult to keep upright. It also scrapes on the bottom if you don't get the angle just right.

**Wish list:** Obviously, this review of the Peavey Escort 5000 is favorable, but one thing that would make it even better would be to have an input AND OUTPUT on the included speakers—so they could be daisy-chained. This would give the user far greater flexibility in placing the speakers. For example, at a wedding ceremony, you could set up off to one-side and but be able to place speakers to the left and right of the officiant simply by running cable from the mixer, to speaker L to speaker R. Oh, and I wish the speaker jack didn't have to be on the front.

While I've noticed that some DJs do the very least they can when asked to provide sound and PA for ceremonies, this system from Peavey offers you an opportunity to do things "one better." Instead of just a wireless mic and music source connected to powered speaker, it gives you a way to show your clients that you provide a more professional solution that's designed around their needs. That may mean nothing to some, but it may mean the world to those who really want something better for their ceremony. With a selling price of around \$800, an Escort 5000 could pay for itself in just a few outings. As an added plus, with the monitor feed and subwoofer output, it can act as a back up your main system. When it's not needed for wedding duty, you can use it to generate extra cash when a client needs a quick, on-location PA system for voice or music. And when you need a small system for a house party or similar event, add a small sub and you'll have a system that'll play loud but take up very little space.

When you balance all that the Peavey Escort 5000 does against the few gripes I've noted, and then consider the price, the question really becomes, "Why wouldn't a DJ want one?" **MB**

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# Serious Contender for Turntable Ascendancy

THE RELOOP RP-8000 STANDS TALL AMONG WOULD-BE 1200 SUCCESSORS

By Michael Buonaccorso, Jr.

**D**uring a recent wedding consultation, a potential client asked me if I was “all digital”, meaning that I used a computer system over CDs or other form of physical media. My answer was that while I do indeed use a computer-based system, I would not want to demean creative individuals using different types of equipment than I do. The type of media you use, brand of controller you purchase, or software you like best—its all a personal preference. Its not what type of equipment you use that is important, it is how you use it.

That said, the turntable is just another tool that some DJs prefer over other forms of equipment. And there are no rules that say you must be a club DJ to use turntables. Maybe you prefer the classic look and feel of a real turntable. Maybe you prefer the organic nature only found using real vinyl. As creative artists, we must use the tools best suited to our personal styles, to make our performance the best it can be for our clients.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In October of 1972, Technics released the first SL-1200 turntable. While originally designed and marketed for the audiophile, the direct-drive motor and high-quality metal design quickly gained a huge following among both club and mobile DJs alike. At a time when vinyl was the only medium that music was available on, the 1200 reigned over all. Fast-forward a few decades. and most mobile DJs switched to CDs or cassettes and eventually to digital. But vinyl, as well as the 1200, still reigned in the club scene through the 80s, 90s, and early 00s. When mobile DJs switched to digital in the mid 00s, club DJs followed suit. But club DJs (and some mobiles), already familiar with vinyl, switched to the Digital Vinyl System, or DVS. Using control records instead of physical Vinyl, DVS mimics the feel of actual vinyl while using MP3s, and without the crates and crates of records to lug around. In late 2010, Technics decided to discontinue the SL-1200 series of turntables after 38 years of production.

Because the Technics SL-1200 was (and still is) the industry standard turntable in the industry, it is inevitable that all other turntables are compared to the Technics. Since it is no longer produced, several companies have stepped in to release what they hope to be equivalent offerings.

## RELOOP ENTERS THE ARENA

A couple of entries in the field come from the German company, Reloop. Introduced in late 2013, the RP-7000 and RP-8000 are Reloop's new line of DJ turntables, designed for the working professional. If Serato isn't your thing, consider purchasing the Reloop RP-7000. This is a stripped down version of the RP-8000,

omitting the MIDI controls, and digital pitch fader readout. The price for this unit is discounted by about \$175. This review will focus on the feature-packed RP-8000.

## CONSTRUCTION

The RP-8000 is very well constructed, with an all-metal chassis and platter. The physical dimensions are nearly identical to the Technics SL-1200. In fact, when I tested out this turntable at a gig, I used same the case from my SL-1200 to transport the Reloop table, and the fit was perfect. There is no discernable difference in size.

While the RP-8000 has provisions for a plastic dust cover, it is not included with the unit. Because most DJs use hard cases to protect their turntables in transport, the dust cover is almost never used. I am confident most DJs will not care about this omission.

On the back of the turntable, you'll find a set of RCA output jacks, an AC power port, and a USB input/output. There is also a 230/115V switch. Next to the RCA output jacks, there is a phono/line switch. Some modern mixers no longer include a phono level input, but that's not a problem with the RP-8000, as it also has the ability to provide a quality line level output. What you won't see on the back of this turntable is a grounding post. The RP-8000 is self grounded, so a ground wire to your mixer is not required.

For those of you familiar with the Technics hard-wired RCA and power cables, having plugs for these items on the back of the turntable is a massive improvement. If you needed to replace an RCA or power cable on the 1200, a soldering iron was required. This is not the case with the RP-8000.

On top of the turntable, I found the on/off/strobe knob, start/stop button, 33/45 buttons, tone arm, and pitch fader all in the familiar (Technics 1200-like) locations. But beyond that, Reloop has placed their own spin on the RP-8000 with additional features. First of all, this turntable has an additional start/stop button on the upper left hand corner of the table. This allows the user to place the turntable in “Battle Mode”, while still having easy access to start and stop. A reverse button next to the 33 and 45 buttons is a welcome addition as well.

On the right side of the turntable, there is a pitch fader with a quartz lock switch and LED. Quartz lock returns the turntable pitch back to 0. A large LCD screen above the pitch fader allows the user to see exactly how much the pitch is being manipulated. And pitch range buttons allow the user to adjust the range of the pitch to either  $\pm 8\%$ ,  $\pm 16\%$ , or  $\pm 50\%$ .

Another interesting addition to the typical turntable feature set is found on the left side of the unit, where there are eight mappable MIDI drum pads, as well as four performance mode select buttons. The drum pads are backlit and can be used for a variety of things, including hot cue points, loops, rolls, and samples.

Two more innovative features of this turntable are the adjustable torque and brake knobs. Found near the pitch fader LED, these knobs adjust to your personal preference. Increasing





the torque makes the turntable more resistant to scratching. Manipulating the brake starts and stops the turntable at a user adjustable speed. These features may not be useful for the DJ that only uses tables for simple mixing, but for serious scratch DJs, this is a potential game changer.

## SERATO INTEGRATION

The RP-8000 is an official Serato accessory. The designation as an official Serato accessory means that the RP-8000 is designed with Serato in mind. It is fully compatible with both Serato DJ and Serato Scratch Live. At press time, the RP-8000 was the only turntable to be considered an official Serato accessory.

One thing to note, however, is that the RP-8000 only works with Serato DJ or Serato Scratch Live as an accessory. This means that you first must have an official Serato compatible mixer, controller, or sound card hooked up to your computer. For example, if you use a Pioneer DDJ-SX, a Serato-enabled controller, you are able to hook 1 or 2 of these turntable up to this controller, and they will work perfectly.

There is also a big black clickable knob, which Reloop calls the TRAX push encoder. This scroll wheel allows the user to scroll through tracks in Serato, and load a track onto the deck. This eliminates the need to scroll through your computer when locating a song.

## IN USE

I tested this turntable at one of my regular bar gigs using one Reloop RP-8000 turntable, one Technics SL-1200 turntable, my mixer, and Serato Scratch Live. I removed the second SL-1200 from my coffin case and replaced it with the RP-8000. As I

mentioned previously, the fit was perfect.

Once I was up and running, distinguishing the feel of the SL-1200 from the RP-8000 was nearly impossible, they felt exactly the same. Yet the innovative features on the Reloop were welcome additions. Everything worked flawlessly with Serato. The MIDI drum pads, the extra play/stop button, and the digital pitch fader read out clearly scream that of a turntable designed and built in the 21st century.

Reloop has made a big splash recently with their new line of turntables, mixers, and controllers. Since Reloop does not have as much brand recognition as some of the bigger DJ brands, they are relying on quality and value to sell their products. And this turntable is no exception to this rule. It is a high-quality, heavy-duty unit, and has a street price of \$775. I have only positive things to say about the RP-8000. If I ever need another turntable, this is the model I would purchase in a second. **MB**

[www.reloop.com](http://www.reloop.com)



*Michael Buonaccorso, Jr. grew up immersed in a DJ environment, as son of pro DJ and Mobile Beat cofounder, Mike B., Sr. With an inborn curiosity about how things work, he went from repairs on old radios to lawn mowers to automobiles to sound equipment. Not surprisingly, today he holds a bachelors degree in mechanical engineering and runs his own entertainment company. He has attended every Mobile Beat Show since 1997.*



# Why a Line Array?

A NEW APPROACH IS NEEDED FOR LARGE-SCALE DJ SOUND

By Jake Feldman

**S**o many times, we hear of DJs bringing in the wrong sound system for the situation at hand. I've been guilty of it a time or two based upon availability, truck space, and budget of client. What, you might ask, is the wrong sound system for an application? For example, if you have to use 12 full-range cabinets in a stacked configuration aimed at being loud in a hanger-type space, you might just have the wrong system for the application. But there's a solution, which comes from the realm of large-event sound production: the line-array.



## WHAT IS IT?

A line-array system is designed to aim sound directly at the audience while limiting the necessary output from one single box using, by using both architecture (a curve) and coupling (ribbon horn) to achieve the desired full-range result. In essence (and in street terms), the longer and bigger the array "line" is, the more powerful the system is and the better the boxes can replicate the true sound of the music being produced.

## WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME AS A DJ?

These are the right speakers for your larger applications—here's why: If your large-event sound isn't sounding so good, in a nutshell, you were probably experiencing signal loss due to both comb filtering (frequency cancellation) on the top end and power valleys on the low-end. Most likely, the cabinets you chose to use aren't engineered to be paired together; and if they were, not usually more than three per side. In any event, as you walk around the room, you can tell where certain parts of the room have full frequency and others sound muffled or distorted.

Line arrays are better because on a horizontal plane they utilize the same ribbon, meaning they are not competing with horns in the same stack for frequency space and output. Rather, on the vertical plane, they are pairing together to carry further and reach more bodies.

## GAIN AN EDGE

While line array technology isn't new, I would guarantee you that not a lot of DJs in your area utilize them for a large corporate event, school dances, walks and fundraisers. This means that automatically for those events (in my opinion the only type of events for which equipment should be discussed) you as the entertainment provider can and do have that as a selling point over your competition.

Along with that, if you're being paired with a band, now you have a system that sounds great and can be utilized for their sound as well, meaning less floor space being eaten up by the entertainment in the client's eyes, and also a negotiation point for the client when making arrangements for the band (most bands charge more if they must provide their PA).

## CONSIDERATIONS

When planning line array use, you'll need to discuss the layout of the room and the possible need to fly the system to achieve maximum system output and success. If you do decide to rig a line array from the ceiling, truss, or specialized lifts, be sure to build it into your cost with the client (and properly sell them on why they need to spend the extra money). Also enlist the services of a certified, competent rigger (your local stagehand/rigger union can get you in touch with a pro). Of course, if you're seriously considering a line array, then you most likely have the capital to ensure that the rigging gets handled properly.

Also important to consider is the cost of such a system. Most pro boxes in a line-array system begin at \$2,500 per cabinet for the full-range array and \$2,000 or so for subs. So, if you're doing the math, that means that three full-range cabinets per side with two subs per-side plus the ground-stack mount will cost you north of \$20,000 to secure. The upside is that this configuration will be in service for 10 years or more making you money.

## WHY DJS SHOULD EMBRACE LINE ARRAYS

DJs want to be perceived as professionals, however not using new technology when it comes to event attendee comfort is decidedly unprofessional. Think about this: You're at an event and the sound is muffled and distorted where you are at and you find out the entertainment provided the sound. No matter how great of a DJ or MC the person may be, they still didn't use the right gear for the job—making them unprofessional at a portion of their job.

More output, clearer-sound, a professional new school look, and the ability to provide sound for larger spaces ARE NOW hallmarks of line arrays. Carpeted speakers, wobbly stands and music note vests WERE hallmarks of the DJ industry.

Changing with the times is what we need to do to stay relevant, and that includes re-thinking our sound for school dances and larger events. Just like we've gradually moved away from being the "dorks" with the music note vests—we're in danger of becoming the "dorks" with 1980s sound systems. For large events, we need to live in the now and switch to line arrays. **MB**



# DAS: What I'm Talking About

USER-FRIENDLY LINE ARRAY: THE EVENT SERIES FROM DAS

By Jake Feldman

**N**ow that you know the why's and the how's of line array systems, let me talk specifically about a new system from DAS: the Event Series. Over the course of two months, I've pushed this series to the edge in a series of different events. The results...

To begin with, the system that the scientists of sound at DAS sent my way included six Event 210a full-range array cabinets, as well as four 218a subwoofer modules and two ground-stack stands specifically designed to fit the 210a cabinets.

Like all of the sound systems in our fleet, this new product is indeed active and is designed for use both indoors and outdoors. The system can be "flown" in the air from lifts, trussing, or from the ceiling of a venue. In all of my trials, however, I utilized the ground-stack or stage-stack configuration, which I'm sure would be the typical situation for most DJs.

The 210a's are designed just like the name sounds: with two 10" woofers and a mid-range frequency and high frequency drivers, making the boxes 3-way. On the low end of the frequency spectrum, the 218a subwoofers are outfitted with two 18" subwoofers.

## LETTING THE HORSES RUN

To say this particular system has a lot of horsepower is an understatement. Of the Event 210a, each of the frequencies represented carry a 360W peak rating and the cabinets themselves have a frequency range of 70hz to -20khz and a horizontal coverage angle of 90 degrees. What that means for the average DJ is a bit different from normal speaker ratings, because of the use of pairing and coupling to achieve the desired response (see the accompanying article).

You can also say the 218a brings the thump, being powered with a 3600W (peak) amplifier providing "thrust" to the dual 18" drivers with their 4" voice coils. With just one of these active in my warehouse upon arrival of the shipment, I was able to annoy my neighbors down the block—meaning the sound carried



over 500 feet, from out of standalone brick building and into another—now that's saying something.

## FUNCTION

The whole system is extremely versatile, able to handle many different kinds of events. For example, the 218a's are designed to be stacked and not move, thanks to a platter-and-groove "leg" system that, paired with the weight of the cabinets means that they aren't going anywhere. In another setting, the subs can

be stacked and the tops flown, providing a chance to get those sound waves over your audience members' heads.

One difficulty for some will most likely be the weight and the size of these cabinets, specifically the sub-woofer. The subs take up a space of 21.3" x 41.7" x 26.4" and weigh 176 pounds each. However, once you hear them, you'll know why. Let's just say, if you are using them, you are no longer in the minor leagues of sound production, my friend. The 210a's each weigh just under 75 pounds a piece and also and



## Gaff Gun Takes Aim at Cable Challenge



We've all been there: The venue leaves you an hour for set up, so you have to arrive in your suit. Sound and video are linked in three rooms, separated by concrete walls and 100 feet. Gear is set up and tested in 30 minutes and the next 30 you are on your hands and knees frantically taping your cables

down before guests arrive.

For the past four years, GaffTech has been developing and testing various tape applicator designs with one thought in mind: There has to be a better way. Finally, after dozens of prototypes, they just released our first applicator: the GaffGun.

The GaffGun allows the user to straighten cables and lay tape in one quick motion. With the interchangeable CableGuides, you simply choose the size that fits the number and size of cables you need to lay. Now, as fast as you can walk, you can tape down your cables. CoreLok technology locks the tape roll onto the GaffGun, ensuring the tape is perfectly centered over your cables and allowing the user to adjust the tape tension as needed. For those who need it, GaffTech offers an adapter for standard tape.

[www.gaffgun.com](http://www.gaffgun.com)

## Stealth In the Running

Alto Professional's Stealth Wireless Modular Speaker System has been nominated for a Technical Excellence & Creativity (TEC) Award. Established in 1985, they honor outstanding achievement in professional audio production and product innovation.

The Alto Professional Stealth Wireless system adds wireless audio connectivity to any active loudspeaker, eliminating the need for long, cable runs, without any compromise in audio quality. (See the MB review in the July 2014 issue (#157), p.52.)

Nominees were chosen by an extensive panel of veteran sound and music industry professionals, and the winners will be determined by subscribers to Mix, Pro Sound News, Pro Audio Review and Electronic Musician, as well as members of pro audio and sound production organizations through online voting to take place this December. For more information, visit [altoprofessional.com](http://altoprofessional.com).

## DAS: What I'm Talking About

measure 10.6" x 28.7" x 14.4". Keep in mind that these weights include the embedded amplifiers in each unit.

You can definitely say this series was meant to be on the road and used at a variety of events, be it indoors or outdoors. Both the finish (ISO-Flex Paint) and the plastic flaps covering the heat dispersion grooves, as well as the input-output ports are impervious to everything but a torrential downpour of rain. Remember that old deodorant commercial: "Strong enough for a man—yet gentle enough for a woman?" Indeed, this series is strong enough for an outdoor festival—yet gentle enough in appearance for a black-tie corporate gala.

Using the Event Array Series has almost no learning curve, as there are different settings for the different ways you can use it. There are buttons for the number of cabinets in your array, as well as depth of throw. Also handy is the ability to use Neutrik powerCON connectors in a series, to avoid having to run AC for each box. Of course, the signal is carried to the "stacks" via XLR cable, and crossed over in the subwoofer.

Finally, the ease of connecting the top boxes to each other should be noted. The technology used to rig the boxes together is technically called "quick-rig," but it is simple and effective. In essence, pins are included in carrying sleeves on the 218a's themselves. To connect the boxes, you simply choose the desired angle from a flip-down steel plate (also attached to the 218a) and insert the locking pin. Then, you repeat the process with the desired number of cabinets.

## THE ROAD TEST

As I mentioned before, I used the Event Array system on a series of events—a concert, a fundraiser, a community festival, and a teen event—and in each case I learned a bit more about the system.

At the concert, my sound tech, Paul, who was familiar with another of DAS series, which he had used on a tour with a circus, was pleasantly surprised both at the clarity as well as the throw, both in the afternoon in the empty outdoor area as well as during the show with bodies soaking up the frequencies. Paul also mentioned the positive improvements made by DAS in this small-scale line array system over the previous incarnation he had used, including the quick-rig system that made it possible for one person to set up the system alone. The band was also blown away, as they'd never had a system that overpowered their in-ear monitors so much that at one point the singer took out his "ears" and just used the PA as a reference for himself.

I was also equally satisfied at the community festival, fundraiser, and teen events. At each, I utilized the ground-stack formation and was able to carry enough sound to where I needed it to be, without it becoming overwhelming. The fundraiser location featured a balcony, which was a perfect opportunity to curve the array up to carry the sound.

The way I see it, you have two choices: You can continue getting by with what you have and hopefully satisfying your large event clients...or you can really wow them with the right tools for the job. The Event Array system from DAS is definitely the right tool to get the big jobs done right. **MB**

[www.dasaudio.com](http://www.dasaudio.com)





## Q & A

### Uncomfortable Toasters

**Q:** What is a good way to help people who are uncomfortable with giving toasts or just don't know what to say?

– Bill Lemon, *Disc Inferno Music, Pittsburgh, PA*

**A:** Many people who are requested to or want to give a toast at weddings or other events are not always comfortable in doing so. One thing you can do, when meeting with clients to go over the itinerary prior to the event, is to give them some help in creating a toast, or even a pre-written generic script to follow. The discomfort most people feel about having the responsibility of the toast comes simply from the fact that they don't think they can think of something interesting to say.

Your help to them can be as simple as some suggestions to help them generate ideas, like when the best man first met his best buddy the groom and things they did together, embarrassing or not.

In other cases, scripts can be pre-written for heads of companies, presidents of organizations, anniversary couples, etc. They'll love you for it.

## TIP

### What's In YOUR Emergency Kit?

The bride can't find her garter...The groom just split his pants...The photographer's a no-show...Ma has a headache and just yelled at all the aunts...

Always have an Emergency Kit with you regardless of the type of event. It can include a garter, a small sewing kit, a camera, aspirin, bow tie, shoe laces, bandages, upset stomach remedies, etc., etc., etc. Think for yourself of everything possible that can go wrong at any event and put together a kit of all supplies you think necessary to take care of last-minute booboos. You'll be a hero and you'll be remembered. To carry it all, I use a fishing tackle box with all the individual trays. Works great!

Send your questions to Mike Vaillancourt at [goldenmikedj@gmail.com](mailto:goldenmikedj@gmail.com).

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# Music Database Management

## HOW TO AVOID TRACK INFO MAYHEM

**By Richard McCoy**

The latest, computerized generation of DJs is subject to a unique set of issues centering on the use of the computer. It appears that almost any person with a laptop computer can gain access to a huge musical library without regard to its origin. As a result, these databases are subject to the habits and mannerisms of all the parties involved. Every user has the ability to enter their own version of a file naming and/or ID3 tag representation of what they think is best. As a result, the free music databases have become, in many cases, more hinderance than help in managing a digital music collection consistently.

If a song is not located in one of these free databases, then the user is allowed to create a file name of their own desire. The user then “submits” their input to the database, allowing others to retrieve it upon request. If many people use different file naming formats, then the database becomes “contaminated.” Each time you use these databases, the contaminated data is passed on.

Along with regular tracks, it is not uncommon for today's computerized DJ to have 50,000 or more karaoke titles. For each song, standard CD+G discs contain both a WAV audio file and a CDG graphic file used to produce a karaoke song words. These discs can be translated into several different formats, depending upon how the ripping software is set.

Thus, the info for any given song can end up in any of several different formats, depending on your setup. Take for example the Kenny Rogers song “Ruby Don’t Take Your Love To Town.” This song title and artist can be ripped in several different formats as



*Richard has been an electronics hardware/software engineer in Silicon Valley for over 45 years, and is listed on several patents. During that same time, he has also operated as a mobile DJ, doing more than 4000 shows. He has contributed to the design of chips, graphics cards, audio and video systems, computers, and even satellites, as well as DJ lighting and sound equipment, while working for companies like Fairchild, Acer and Atari.*

shown below:

1. Kenny Rogers - Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town (Commonly accepted format)
2. Rogers Kenny-Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town (No spaces on either side of dash) (Last name first)
3. Rogers Kenny-Ruby Don t Take Your Love To Town (No apostrophe used in "Don't")
4. Rogers, Kenny-Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town (Comma used between Last and First names)
5. Rogers, Kenny-Ruby Don t Take Your Love To Town
6. Rogers\_Kenny-Ruby\_Don't\_Take\_Your\_Love\_To\_Town



(Underscore used between each word)

7. Rogers\_Kenny\_-\_Ruby\_Don't\_Take\_Your\_Love\_To\_Town  
(Underscore used between each word, different usage)
8. Kenny Rogers & First Edison - Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town  
(Commonly accepted format)
9. Kenny Rogers and First Edison - Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town  
(& replace with the word "and")
10. Rogers, Kenny First Edison- Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town  
(No "and" used between Kenny and First)
11. 01- Roger Kenny-Ruby Don t Take Your Love To Town  
(Added Track Number)
12. 01-0345- Roger Kenny-Ruby Don t Take Your Love To Town  
(Added track and file number)

Above are just 12 of the most commonly produced file-naming formats. All 12 entries are for the same song, but they are filed and printed differently because of the variance in file-naming. With a large library of tracks, these naming methods can require a lot more CPU time and disc space, and it can also confuse the



singer. This may still leave the files' ID3 tags a mess, causing the file information to be displayed differently by various DJ software programs. In general, karaoke files obtained from other sources may not be formatted in the arrangement you are familiar with.

Simplify put, a file's ID3 tags are "imbedded file information" not usually visible to the user, but used (read) by many DJ/KJ programs. It can contain song information like: Artist, Title, Genre, Track #, Date Created and more. The file name you see may not be the actual ID3 tag information within the file structure. When a file is copied, the filename and ID3 information are copied at the same time. While it may be possible to change the filename, the ID3 information can (and usually does) remain the same. Changing the filename will not change the ID3 tag information. Specific access (through a menu, or a separate piece of software) is required to alter the ID3 tag information. Some DJ programs display the ID3 information while others may display filenames. Some may do both. To best learn about ID3 tags, you should read your user's manual for a complete explanation of how your program uses file names and/or ID3 tags.

Additional information may be added to the file name to help the user locate a particular karaoke song. The DJ software I use allows me to define fields that make it easy for me to locate a song. Of course adding this info can be time-consuming and might not be a high priority for many DJs. I have found, however, that using these fields can help a lot with finding tracks quickly.

Example of karaoke file name that I use:

Kenny Rogers - Ruby Don't Take Your Love To Town - Karaoke - Song Choice

This format allows my computer software to identify the song as a karaoke song and provides the source when I perform a search. Some singers want only the version they've sung before and are most comfortable with.

Keep in mind, that when a karaoke song is ripped, an MP3 and CDG file are produced with the same names. If there is any difference between the MP3 and CDG file names, the karaoke song will not function properly. One or the other component will play on its own.

When the above format variations are used in conjunction with karaoke listings software, it can result in the printing of many pages and the duplication of songs. It is not uncommon to see a KJ with a songbook five inches thick with multiple listings for artists and/or songs depending on how the original song was ripped. Thus a lot of ink and paper can be saved by maintaining proper formats, as well. I have reduced my song books to about one inch by printing on both sides and editing all my filenames and ID3 tags to match. This way, I'm able to produce additional songbooks with improved listings, and I still save money.

Some KJ software will allow the user to modify or change the ID3 tags. However, this is usually done one song at a time and will consume a lot of time if a KJ has a large library. There are other software programs available that will allow the KJ to make bulk changes to filenames and/or ID3 tags to save time and trouble for large libraries.

Whatever format or file naming method you use should be the same for all the files in your library. This may require the KJ to modify some files. However, in the long-run, it will be easier for you to locate the file for your performers and will reduce the size of your play list. Just make sure everything you do, for every file, is the same. There is no standard file naming format, but you should establish your own standard—and stick to it!

The software and programs I use are available upon request. You may contact me at [sounds@mr-music.com](mailto:sounds@mr-music.com) for additional information or help. **MB**

## The Questions Spin...

Was a monkey once trained to be a Mobile DJ?



Who was widely acclaimed as the world's first Mobile DJ but after his death in 2011 was exposed for his criminal life?

Will the Soho section of New York City be the future site of the Mobile DJ Museum?



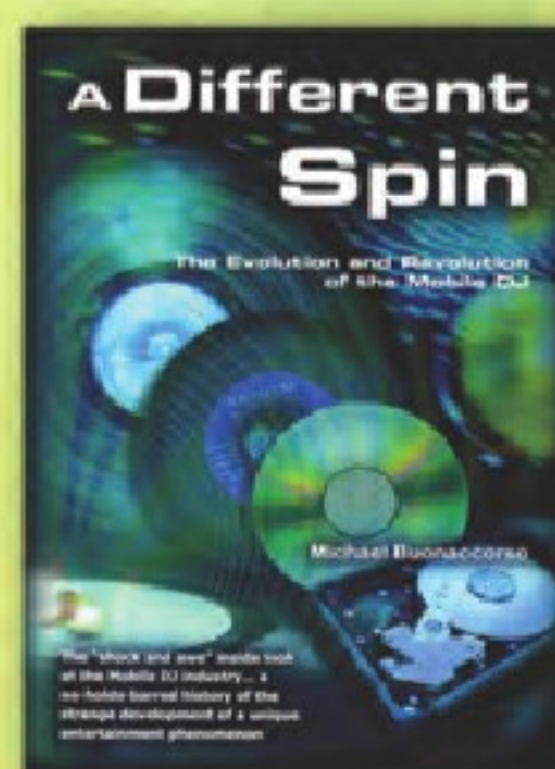
Who developed a line of DJ speakers in red, yellow, purple, and two shades of blue?

In 1997, how did the release of the motion picture *Titanic* spur a DJ craze? Or did it?



Just who was Mobile Beat's "Dr." Shock Jock" and what did he say to cause such a controversy?

What was the largest scandal ever involving Mobile Beat Magazine, and who were the players?



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## Staying Part-Time

Dear Dave,

*I work full-time as a guidance counselor at a high school, but I bake and decorate cakes on the side. Word about my cakes has gotten around, and the demand has really grown. Now I'm being asked to do weddings and lots of other big events. I want to keep my business small, and I'm not sure how to handle things now.*

– Jamie

Dear Jamie,

It's great that demand has risen, but I can understand how that could also be a burden in your situation.

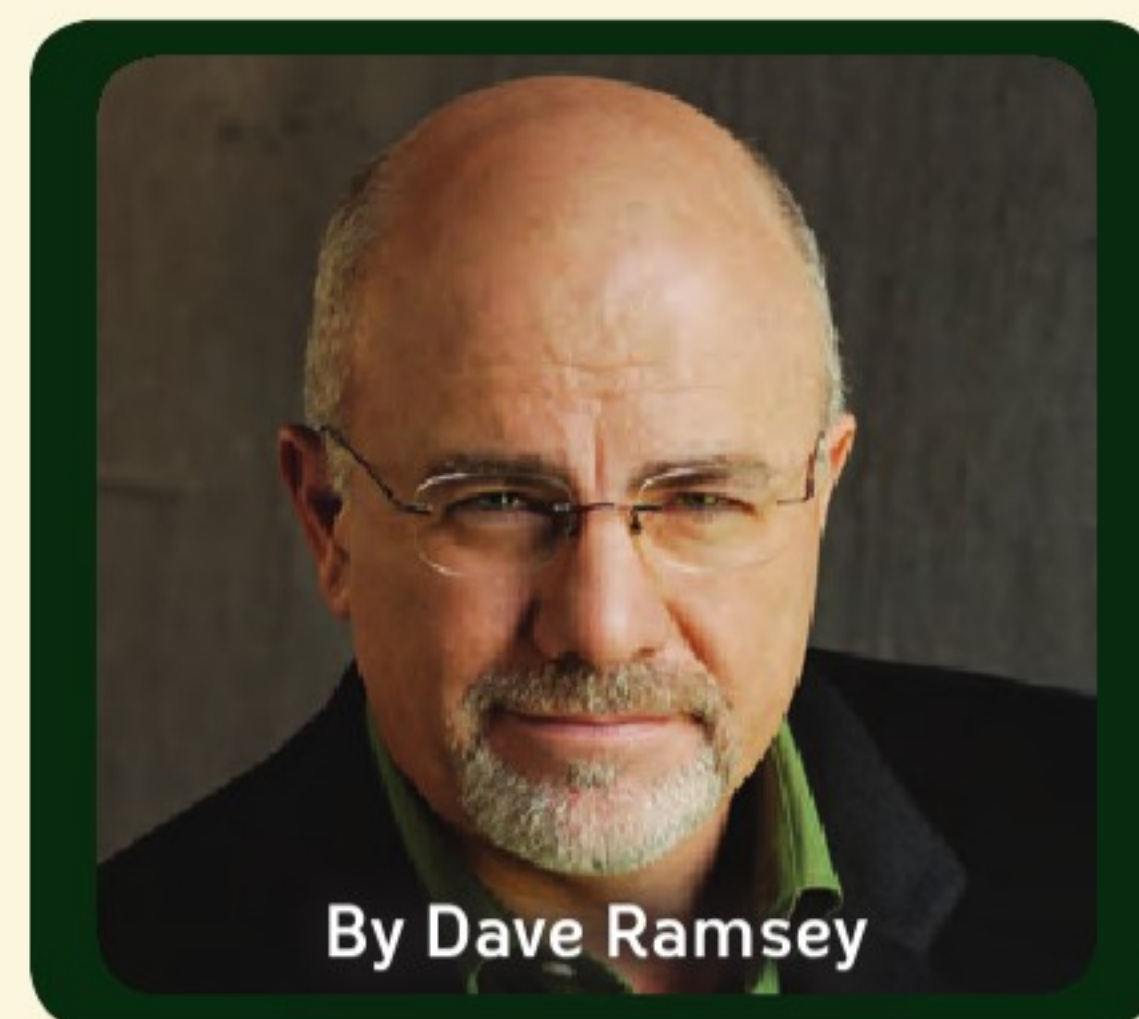
Trying to keep a side business from

blossoming into a full-time job can be a good problem to have though. It means people really like what you're doing. I'd suggest two things if you're absolutely sure you want to keep this business small and maintain it as a cottage industry.

First, you need to raise your prices. Some people will decide not to be customers any longer, but that's okay. You might not have quite as many clients, but you'll make more per cake.

The second thing is to be selective about the people with whom you choose to work. Even if things have picked up lately, you're still not doing a big enough volume to put up with a lot of attitude from spoiled customers. If a Bridezilla walks through the door, you can simply choose not to work with her.

That's my advice, Jamie: Select your clients carefully and raise your prices. I think



By Dave Ramsey

you'll get more enjoyment—and more money—out of your business that way!

– Dave

### Mobile Beat Notes:

Like many DJs, Jamie is a part-time entrepreneur, and she wants to keep her cake business part-time. There are plenty of

professional-level DJs who make a nice extra income as a single operator doing 20-50 events a year—who don't have aspirations of going full time and quitting

the day job. Dave's advice fits perfectly with what many DJs have been doing for 10+ years, as far as raising their rates and keeping their service personalized.

## First Mission Statement

Dear Dave,

*How do you build a personal and company mission statement?*

– Scott

Dear Scott,

This is a great question. First, I think you understand the importance of what you're doing. Coming up with a meaningful mission statement—one that is impactful both for you and your clients—will take some time. It's not a 1- or 2-hour meeting kind of thing. It is one of the most important things you'll

ever do as a business owner, because it will impact you, your team and how you do business.

That's not to say that mission statement can't evolve over time. As your company changes and grows, and as the marketplace moves, it's perfectly okay, and sometimes necessary, to carefully and thoughtfully rewrite your mission statement. If this happens, just make sure you take the same care and time used when you crafted your original one.

More than anything else, I think your mission statement should reflect your calling. I also believe it needs to include the following information:

- **Your or your company's skills and abilities.** If you've been in manufacturing for 20 years, you probably shouldn't have a mission statement that talks a lot about software development or marketing. That's not your area of expertise. What is

the thing you *can* do, *want* to do, and *will* do?

- **Your or your company's personality traits.** How do you and your team execute projects? This is your personality. Are you task and project-oriented, or are you more compassionate and people-oriented? Maybe you're detail-oriented. I'm not sure I'd want an engineering firm to design interstate overpasses if they're more about compassion and people than details. In that kind of work, the details matter more.

- **Your or your company's values, dreams and passions.** This is why you're doing what you do. For a company mission statement, this is where you really breathe life into the lungs of your organization.

I think this is where you go for your first mission statement, Scott.

– Dave

*Dave Ramsey is America's trusted voice on money and business. He has authored four New York Times best-selling books, Financial Peace, More Than Enough, The Total Money Makeover and EntreLeadership. The Dave Ramsey Show is heard by more than 6 million listeners each week on over 500 radio stations. Follow Dave on Twitter at @DaveRamsey and on the web at daveramsey.com.*

### Mobile Beat Notes:

Mobile Beat Notes: Scott's question is about having direction in what one is doing with his or her business. Many DJs get into the game because they simply enjoy entertaining and the nice income

it can bring in. But to succeed long-term, a DJ has to stay focused and not become "Music and Lights for Any Occasion..." A mission statement is key for setting goals and limits, like being the best at a certain type of event, etc. **MB**





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\* PATENT PENDING

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- Includes White Column Scrim
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# Escaping Curator Syndrome

WHAT IF MY CLIENT SUPPLIES THE MUSIC?

By John Stiernberg

**A**s access to digital music gets easier and cheaper, more clients are programming their own playlists. Some fancy themselves music experts and come to the gig with a music source (smart phone, tablet, or MP3 player) and say, “Just plug this in and press play.” Ouch! How do I stay in control of the programming for the event without offending the client? How do I maintain the value of my service without looking like a sound and lights rental company? This article takes a closer look at “Curator Syndrome” and suggests three action tips for creating a compelling mobile entertainment value proposition and preventing problems.

## DIGITAL MEDIA: FRIEND OR FOE?

Remember the days of vinyl and “DJ pools” that you could join so that you did not have to buy so many records? Then came CDs, which allowed for more music per disc including the occasional themed compilation. We are now (and have been for over ten years) squarely in the digital media era. Things have changed.

On the plus side, digital media is inexpensive, easy to store, “light weight” (to say the least), and easy to program (i.e., organize into playlists). As a DJ, you can build a music library without having to rent physical storage space, transfer media to discs and hard drives, or take hundreds of records to each gig.

The advantages of digital media also flow to fans (your clients), and they know it. Music is good, fast, and cheap—and they don’t have to “pick any two” like in the old days. With terabyte hard drives selling at ever-declining prices and uncompressed versions of songs also readily available, the sound quality ranges from very good to audiophile!

So what is the downside?

## CLIENT AS PROGRAMMER...

Here’s a true story—tell me if you can relate to it. A few years ago, I was on the “music committee” for my college class reunion and was in charge of hiring a DJ. I found a great company (by referral of course) near the town where the school is located and ended up hiring them. There was one hitch.

The DJ said, “Please review our contract before we commit, and take note of the clause about who provides the music.” The paperwork said that the DJ would not take responsibility for the reaction of the audience if the client provided the music. Easy enough to agree with—I signed and the gig went great. Once I had established sufficient rapport, I asked about the clause in the contract. Why? His reply (paraphrased): “Because once I let the bride and groom program their own music, which the bride’s dad hated. He refused to pay me, especially after the older generation complained and left early.”



John Stiernberg is founder and principal consultant with Stiernberg Consulting ([www.stiernberg.com](http://www.stiernberg.com)). John has over 25 years experience in the music and entertainment technology field. He currently works with audio and music companies and others on strategic planning and market development. His book *Succeeding In Music: Business Chops for Performers and Songwriters* is published by Hal Leonard Books. Contact John via e-mail at [john@stiernberg.com](mailto:john@stiernberg.com), or on LinkedIn and Facebook. Follow him at <http://twitter.com/JohnStiernberg>.

I’m guessing that many of you can relate to the story. The scenario is becoming even more prevalent. I call the trend “Curator Syndrome.” This is any situation where a fan, client, friend of the family, or self-appointed “music supervisor” thinks that they know more than you do about event planning, selecting material, reading the crowd, handling requests, sequencing moods and tempos...you get the idea. They the curator—the overseer of the music—not simply the client.

So what can you do about it?

## PRE-EMPTING CURATOR SYNDROME

Pre-empt is the operative word here. The task is to manage the client’s expectations from the first inquiry or meeting onward—do not wait until Dad won’t pay, literally or figuratively. Let’s relate this to our earlier articles on branding and the sales process too. Here are three suggestions for preventing problems, pleasing clients and audiences, and yes, getting paid.

**Action Tip 1.** Promote your programming expertise and music library up front. Let prospective clients know in advance that you not only provide the music and gear, but that doing the programming on their behalf saves them time and money. Need a special song or themed material? Dinner set different from the dance set? Networking reception for a corporate crowd? No problem—you will take care of it.

**Action Tip 2.** Collaborate before you are signed. Ask about the makeup of the audience and the flow of the event itself. What does the audience expect, like, or not like? What is the range of age, gender mix, or other demographic information that would influence programming? What mood do they want to create? Most clients will respond when asked, but may not think to volunteer the information on their own—so ask them.

**Action Tip 3.** Don’t be afraid to turn down a bad gig. With experience, you will be able to smell a Curator Syndrome lurking early in the relationship. Set limits for them and for yourself. If they are intractable and insist on providing all the music themselves, refer them to an AV rental agency—or one of your competitors.

## HERE’S THE POINT...

As digital media continues to be easier to access, store, and retrieve, Curator Syndrome becomes a bigger challenge for mobile entertainers. But with the right promotion and control of the sales process, you can prevent most of the inherent problems without alienating the occasional music-savvy client. Remember to complete the Action Tips in sequence: 1) promote your capabilities up front, 2) collaborate on programming before you sign the contract, and 3) walk away from dangerous clients.

Next issue we’ll take a look at some of the technology and cultural trends that will have an impact on the mobile entertainment business next year and beyond. In the meantime, best wishes for big success in the rest of 2014! **MB**



# How to Lose Business

## 5 DISASTROUS MISTAKES DJS MAKE THAT DRIVE AWAY LEADS

By Stephanie Padovani

**I**t takes a lot of money, time and sweat equity to attract high quality leads to your business. The last thing you want to do is lose them when they're finally standing on your doorstep!

Yet there are common mistakes that drive away the very people you've worked so hard to attract, and I see DJs make them every single day. The good news is that they're easy to fix, once you know what they are.

### 1) A POOR QUALITY, OUTDATED OR HOMEMADE WEBSITE

You have about 7 seconds to make a first impression. That's it. In fact, studies by Princeton psychologists Janine Willis and Alexander Todorov found that a first impression was formed in only 1/10 of a second!

With so many people using the internet to search for and plan their entertainment, that first impression of your business may well be your website. What impression is it leaving with your potential clients?

Your website must convey professionalism and generate a feeling of trust immediately. Otherwise, you will lose the lead.

Not sure if your website qualifies as poor quality? If it features an animated intro, blinking signs or autoplaying music, or if it otherwise looks like it's been pieced together from circa 2005 website leftovers, rest assured that it's driving away business.

### 2) A LOUSY VOICEMAIL MESSAGE

Yet another first impression! "Yo. This is DJ Joey XYZ. You know what to do."

Your clients expect to hire a professional who will represent them as the host and even more importantly, the voice, of their event. If you don't even leave a clear, engaging and friendly voicemail message, you've lost them.

Does your message identify both your name and business? Do you tell them what you want them to do? Does your voice sound like you're smiling?

If not, fix this mistake today.

### 3) NOT LISTENING TO (OR REMEMBERING) DETAILS

Every DJ thinks s/he listens, but most are more comfortable doing the talking. You've been to a DJ networking group before, haven't you? Try getting a word in edgewise with a room full of people who absolutely love to talk. It's worse than dinner with the Italian side of my family.

An easy way to book more clients starting today is to let them do 80% of the talking while you do the listening.

Confession time: I once lost a lead because I replied to an email using a wrong name for the bride-to-be. Once at a client meeting, I failed to catch the fact that the bride's father had passed away and asked what song she was considering for the Father-Daughter Dance. Cringe.

If you're not paying attention to what

your potential client says before he books you, he's going to assume you'll behave the same way at the event.

### 4) ASSUMING YOU KNOW WHAT THE CLIENT WANTS

All clients do not fit the stereotypes we have in our heads (the Bridezilla, the reluctant Groom, the Sweet 16 princess) but one thing they all have in common is that they all hate being treated like "just another client."

We once met with a bride-to-be and her mother, both of whom were obviously very Italian. I asked if they'd like to include some tra-



ditional Italian music at the wedding.

"Thank you for asking!" the mother said. "The last DJ we talked to assumed we wanted the Tarantella. I can't stand that song!"

They hired us on the spot, in large part because we listened and the other DJ didn't. Never assume you know what the client wants; ask them.

### 5) EXPLAINING WHY YOU COST MORE

DJs complain about budget clients and come to us in frustration because their prospects just don't understand why it costs more to hire a professional. "How can I educate these people about my value?" they ask.

Your clients don't care that you've paid more for premium equipment. They don't care that you attend professional training events every year, and they don't care that you're still making payments your mini-van. When you give a laundry list of reasons why you're more expensive to a potential client, it sounds like a justification for a rip off.

If you really want to explain your value, show them, don't tell them. Let it come through in your website, your demeanor, the questions you ask and the professional advice you offer, even before they hire you. The difference should be obvious.

Hey, there's no shame in making mistakes. I even 'fessed up to two of my own in this article, just to make you feel better. But once you know what you've been doing wrong, you have a responsibility to fix it. Or don't, and keep losing those leads. Choose wisely. **MB**



Stephanie Padovani and her husband, Jeff, are the dynamic husband-wife duo behind Book More Brides, the #1 marketing resource for the wedding industry. Visit [BookMoreBrides.com/priceshopper](http://BookMoreBrides.com/priceshopper) to learn "How to Position Yourself as a Valued Wedding Expert in Only Five Minutes."



# Help Wanted with Taxes and Numbers

By Mark Battersby

**N**ow is a great time to shop for someone to help with the annual tax bill. You are not looking for the one tax professional or accountant that promises the lowest tax bill but, but rather a professional or firm that can best guide you and your mobile entertainment business through these turbulent times. In fact, if your current professional's philosophy and style is not compatible with your own, maybe a change is in order.

Accounting is a foreign language to many DJs, VJs and KJs and others with mobile entertainment businesses. For others an accountant is someone to prepare the mobile entertainment operation's tax returns. Obviously, an accountant is far more than someone who only prepares income tax returns. Understanding what an accountant does -- and utilizing their services -- can mean the difference between a troubled business and a successful one.

## PLAYING THE NUMBERS

The owners, managers and operators of many mobile entertainment businesses often make the mistake of using the terms "accounting" and "bookkeeping" interchangeably. They are not synonymous, however. Bookkeeping is chiefly the clerical phase of accounting.

Bookkeepers are responsible primarily for the systematic recording of the mobile entertainment operation's financial transactions, often using systems or accounting software created by an accountant.



*Mark E. Battersby is a freelance writer based in the Philadelphia area. His features, columns and reports have appeared in leading trade magazines and professional journals since the early 1980s. When not actually writing, Mark spends most of his time digging for exciting tax and financial strategies to write about.*

Accounting, on the other hand, is a much broader area. Accountants are responsible for developing systems to classify and summarize transactions and for interpreting financial statements. Accountants are -- or should be -- decision makers, while bookkeepers are trained in the largely mechanical tasks of recordkeeping.

## WHO IS THAT ACCOUNTANT?

Accountants are far more than tax preparers or bean counters. A good accountant can be a mobile entertainer's financial partner for life -- with intimate knowledge of everything from how you are going to finance your next equipment purchase to how you're going to finance your child's college education.

Although more and more accountants are moving into a fifth area: personal financial planning -- a natural extension of their familiarity with their client's financial affairs -- a general accounting practice usually covers four basic areas of expertise:

- Business advisory services
- Accounting and recordkeeping
- Taxes, and
- Auditing

The four basic disciplines often overlap. If, for instance, an accountant is helping prepare the financial statements required for a loan, he might cross the line from auditing into business advisory services, providing some insight into the loan process. Or after preparing the mid-year financial statements, the accountant might suggest how the operation's year-to-date figures will impact on its year-end tax liability.

An accountant can be hired to set up bookkeeping systems, to assist in evaluating complex business transactions, to prepare annual tax returns or to provide accounting services on an on-going basis. How can you find a good, affordable accounting professional?

## LOCATING, LOCATING, LOCATING

A recent survey of the members of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants revealed that largely as a result of the economy, CPA firms today are most worried about keeping their clients. After client retention, tax law complexity and changes concerned small practitioners, while new regulations and standards on small firms worried firms with up to 20 professionals -- illustrating the need for qualified professional advice and the interest of many firms and professionals in adding new clients and retaining old ones.

The first step to finding the right tax professional -- or any professional -- requires an inventory of what you and your mobile entertainment business actually need in the way of services and advice and, most importantly, how much you can afford to pay for that advice or services. It is important to determine beforehand just how much of the work you and your business will do and how much of it will be done by the professional -- or professionals.

## SHOPPING

Many professionals offer free first meetings for discussion of expectations, services needed and provided, extent of involvement by the professional and the portion of the work you expect to shoulder, time constraints and, above all, costs. It is not "tacky" to discuss fees before engaging the services of any professional although money should not be the sole criteria for selecting that professional.

The best way to find a good accountant is to get a referral



from your attorney, your banker or a business colleague in your field. For more possibilities, every state has a Society of Public Accountants that can provide referrals. Obviously, every mobile entertainer should always keep in mind the mantra: "Bigger isn't always better."

A big accounting firm may boast impressive credentials. The problem is that they may also boast an impressive fee structure. Not too surprisingly, the hotshot "industry expert" may not be the one that actually performs the services. That task is likely to fall to a less experienced junior partner. Admittedly, this is not always bad so long as the charges accurately reflect the lower billing fees of the junior member actually doing the work.

When interviewing potential accountants, the principal goal should be to find out three things: services performed, personality, and fees charged.

Most, if not all, accounting firms offer tax and auditing services. What about bookkeeping services, management consulting, pension fund accounting, estate planning? Will the accountant help you design and implement that computerized bookkeeping software?

Other services provided by accountants include analyzing transactions for business loans and financing, preparing, auditing, reviewing and compiling financial statements, managing investments and even representing the business -- or its owner -- before tax authorities.

In addition to services, make certain the accounting firm has experience with businesses of a similar size and, if at all possible, with your industry. Someone already familiar with the financial issues facing the mobile entertainment industry will not have to waste time -- and your money -- getting up to speed.

Another important question: Is the accountant's style compatible with yours? Having an accountant who takes a different approach can sometimes be a good thing. A super-conservative mobile entertainment business owner may become more successful if exposed to the aggressive side of things. Naturally, no accountant should pressure a client into doing anything they are not comfortable with.

MONEY, MONEY AND MORE MONEY

Always ask about fees upfront. While no mobile entertainer should make this decision solely on cost, keep in mind that how much you contribute can significantly affect the accountant's fees. Accounting firms charge by the hour with fees ranging from as low as \$75 per hour to as much as \$300 or \$400. A number of accountants and accounting firms work on a monthly retainer, providing specific services on a regular basis.

After figuring out the accounting services needed, and what options will be the most cost-effective, get a range of quotes from different accountants. Also, try to get an estimate of the total annual charges based on the services you have discussed.

Above all, don't forget references -- particularly from clients in the same industry. A good accountant should be happy to provide you with references. Call and ask about their satisfaction with the accountant's fees, services and availability.

NURTURING ACCOUNTING RELATIONSHIPS

Details about fees charged and the extent of services to be provided should always be spelled-out in a letter of engagement. This ensures you and the accountant have the same expectations and helps prevent misunderstandings.

As mentioned, the accounting relationship is much like a partnership with each party expected to do their share. Don't for example, hand the accountant a shoebox full of jumbled receipts

at the end of the year. Write down details of all the checks in your check register -- whether they are for utilities, supplies, etc. Likewise, identify sources of income on your bank deposit slip. The better records are maintained, the less time your accountant has to spend on your business -- and the lower your fees will be.

It is a good idea to meet with your accountant every month to review financial statements and go over any problem areas so you know exactly where your money is going. This is when your accountant should go beyond number crunching, suggesting alternative ways of cutting costs and acting as a sounding board for any ideas or questions about your finances.

THE LONG HAUL

Once you have settled on an accountant -- or any, other professional -- it is difficult to switch. The end result, all-too-often, finds many business owners working with mediocre accountants or accountants who have not grown along with their business. Fortunately, changing accountants later may not be as expensive as many imagine. After all, a poor choice in accountants may be costing your business.

Obviously, not everyone needs -- or can afford -- the specialized knowledge and skills accountants possess. But it is good to know what services are available should they be needed by your mobile entertainment operation or business. Remember, however, the time to find a good accountant, to discuss the range of services they can perform and their fees is now. How can these professionals help you as a DJ, KJ, VJ or your mobile entertainment business, grow? **MB**

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# Will the Real ROI Please Stand Up?

WHAT INVESTMENT IN YOUR BUSINESS ARE YOU REALLY MAKING?

By Jeffrey Gitomer

**“Return on Investment” (ROI) in business is predicated on the ability of the company to deliver as promised in product, profit, and its accompanying service.**

It's amazing to me that everyone measures ROI to the penny, and no one measures ROS (return on service) at all.

Most companies are too busy pissing their money away on customer satisfaction surveys when they could eliminate the survey costs, and spend half of that money training people to improve service, and measure the only three things in business that matter: repeat business, profit margins, and referrals - all the rest of the “satisfaction” process is an empty waste of time and money.

Let's get real here, when J.D. Power gives the customer satisfaction award to an airline, what could the category possibly be? Least crappy?

The object of service is to be so amazing that one person tells another person, or one person posts to their Facebook account, or both. How's yours?

The key to profitable repeat business and unsolicited referrals is to create genuine word-of-mouth, and word of mouse about the company, the products and services, and especially the people.

ROI REALITY: Do you want to deliver service that's satisfactory or remarkable?

ROI REALITY: Do you want to deliver service that's satisfactory or memorable?

Return on service can take place in any part of the business. Here are the most prominent examples:

- Provide positive attitude training for everyone in the company
- Provide specific and customized empowerment service training for everyone in the company (what is EACH employee allowed to do and say to a customer?)
- The receptionist or telephone operator. This is the customer's first point of contact and sets the tone for the entire transaction.
- Ship an order error free and backorder free. Get them what they want fast and seamlessly.
- The delivery and arrival of a customer shipment. Packaging determines image, and the condition of the contents upon arrival proves their worth to the shipper and the care of the shipping department. A HUGE part of re-order consideration.
- The accounting department people. Accounting can play a major role in customer loyalty. The way they talk to an account, the frequency of error, their accuracy of invoicing, and the common courtesy they may display when someone is late making a payment.
- Damned automated attendant. No one on earth wants

to hear their telephone call answered by a computer, yet every major company in the world employs these god-forsaken things. There has to be a better way, and the person that creates it will make billions.

- The speed, accuracy, and outcome of handling a complaint. Complaints go WAAAAY beyond one customer. They go all the way to social media.

You must perform REMARKABLE or MEMORABLE service for:

- Following up and thanking customers for an order
- Following up and making certain that the service call went perfectly
- Making certain that everyone on the inside of the company is well rewarded, and well thanked for a job well done.

And for those of you who still possess an ounce of skepticism about ROS after these truths, here are some additional “return” elements to consider.

Many Happy Returns:

- Return on training. Especially for front line people.
- Return on morale. Internal happiness creates customer happiness.
- Return on leadership. The leader sets the tone and the attitude BY EXAMPLE.
- Return on friendliness. All things being equal, people want to do business with their friends.
- Return on getting the job done ahead of schedule. Real profit created by exceptional team effort.
- Return on wowing the customer. Priceless. Period.
- Return on accuracy. Beyond a good feeling all the way to respect – and reorder.
- Return on quality product. This is a given, but creates more word-of-mouth than any other single forum.
- Return on positive social media posts. Social media is the new “satisfaction” survey or report.
- Return on value messages offered to customers on a consistent basis. Weekly value-based messages to customers create life-long desires to stay connected.
- Return on using voice-of-customer in YouTube, blog, and Facebook video posts. When you say it about yourself it's bragging. When someone else says it about you, it's proof. Video proof is the new proof.

Big companies hammer their entire workforce to make certain that their customer satisfaction scores are high or higher, when they could be (should be) creating an internal training program that begins with the word wow, and progresses upward from there. **MB**

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Jeffrey Gitomer is the author of twelve best-selling books, including **The Sales Bible** and **The Little Red Book of Selling**. His bestselling **21.5 Unbreakable Laws of Selling** is now available as a book and an online course at [www.gitomervt.com](http://www.gitomervt.com). For public event dates and information about training and seminars visit [www.gitomer.com](http://www.gitomer.com) or email Jeffrey at [salesman@gitomer.com](mailto:salesman@gitomer.com).



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# When You're Done

THINK ABOUT RETIREMENT NOW, RATHER THAN LATER

By Jason Weldon



**W**hat are you going to do when you are done?

Over the last few years, I have talked with many DJs, as well as other

wedding professionals, about the goals for their future in this business. Most of them are all single operators or have one or two people going out for them either as DJs, shooting video, etc. I always bring up the in conversation what their plans are in 5 years, 10 years or even 20 years. And most of the time, I get a blank stare. Well, today, I want to write about this one very basic question that absolutely needs to be answered immediately.

What does your life look like "X" amount of years from now?

10 years from now you are not going to have the drive that you have now. 15 years from now you are not going to continue to want to go out every single weekend and work. 20 years from now you are not going to want to do any of the same things you are doing today. If you don't believe this, then you may find yourself in a pretty difficult position in a few years when things start to change. And they will change.

It is hard for people to really think about where they are going to be a few years from now, but you really have to try hard. Think about this situation:

Your life is pretty good right now. Lots of energy. All kinds of passion and drive to do all the things you want to do. You are doing 60 events a year, charging \$1,500 an event and making a good living. Fast-forward 5 years. And you are still doing the same number of events, maybe more, and still making the same amount of money, maybe more (heck, maybe even less!) But 5 years later you start to think you want some weekends off. You are getting more mature. You start to have other things you want to accomplish. Some of your priorities change. However, you know you have to work to make the money. If you don't work, you don't make the money. What do you do when you are 10 years into something?

This is a question that nobody ever really asks themselves. When you decide to stop, or let's just say step back a little, how are you going to really keep the revenue coming in? You have given yourself a certain lifestyle; your life now has expectations. And they are fed by the great job that YOU do. That's because you have branded YOU as the guy. You are the person. You are it. That

is not going to cut it when you say "I want to be done."

The goal in life, I believe, is not to be spinning music until you are 60. I think most of us, as we get older, would want to pick and choose the events we want and charge accordingly for those events. That seems like a pretty fair goal to have. I mean, do you really want your goal in life to be doing 4 events in a weekend, running around like crazy?

But if you don't change something now, you are going to end up in that predicament. Are you saving for retirement out of the money you are making now? Do you have enough saved for an emergency fund? Can you support the lifestyle that you will want to have when you do start to slow down with the amount you are making now? No is not a good answer to any of these questions.

The idea is to start thinking about when you are going to be done. Just start. You don't have to have a whole plan by tomorrow, but at least giving it a thought will help get you start getting a handle on some changes that will have to be made. So here are some things I think you could start to do today that might help with that:

Pick an actual time period that you "think" you may want to stop or cut back.

Start to really review the amount of money that you need to generate to live your life, if you personally were to stop doing events.

Start to get some people that could work for you. I know this sounds like a lot of work and could never happen, but if you had just two people that you developed and managed, you would be surprised at how you could technically stop working

Stop branding you as the company. You work for the company. Brand the company.

For all new lines of revenue you want to start, stop thinking about how you should do it and start thinking about how you can get another person to do it. For instance, if you want to add uplighting, don't figure out how you can do it but think about how you can train another person to do it.

Find new revenue streams that work with your existing business plan. (Photo booth, anyone?)

Successful people can see their business years away from where it is now. And it isn't hard to do so. It just takes a few hours to think about. But you have to think about. Not just get caught up in taking the next lead that comes in. Or learning how to operate that new light. Or spending time finding the latest hot songs. This business is constantly being filled with newer, younger people that are going to eventually put in more time than you. And they are going to beat you when they eventually come up against you. Wouldn't you love to have that young, driven person on your team?

I have said it before, take some time to work on the business and not "in" it. Too much time is wasted working in your business. For the young people, turning 50 comes fast. And for the mature folks, time to enjoy life is right around the corner. Don't you want to have a plan to enjoy it? **MB**

Jason Weldon is a wedding business consultant who specializes in small to medium-sized companies that want to grow their business. His objective is to help guide people through organizing their thoughts and laying the groundwork for a better, more successful start-up. He currently lives in Philadelphia and is also the president of Synergetic Sound and Lighting, Inc. and DJ and A/V company.





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